

Anarchism

FAR FROM BEING A SPECULATIVE VISION of a future society, anarchism is a description of a mode of human organisation, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society. This is not a new version of anarchism. Gustav Landauer saw it, not as the founding of something new, 'but as the actualisation and reconstitution of something that has always been present, which exists alongside the state, albeit buried and laid waste.' And a modern anarchist, Paul Goodman, declared that: 'A free society cannot be the substitution of a "new order" for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of social life.'

An anarchist society, a society which organises itself without authority, is always in existence, like a seed beneath the snow...

— Colin Ward, 1924–2010

imminent rebellion

10

hand bound with a **hatred** of the
State infused into every page

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An irregular anarchist journal from deep

A politics that refuses to reduce the **in the South Pacific.**
complexity of life to the singular logic of the State cannot be
simple, it cannot be the domain of easy slogans. Nor can an
anarchist politics ever make the risk of believing it has achieved
a finality, even if only theoretical. This journal
is therefore not propaganda, but a genuine attempt
to articulate an anarchist practice and theory, one whose
articulation must be without end.



Pakeha Rebels

— RYAN BODMAN

DURING THE 19TH CENTURY MĀORI FACED A NUMBER OF assaults against their sovereignty. As a result many Māori, through both peaceful and militaristic means, defended their communities against colonial injustices and came to be known as Māori rebels by the state.

However, Māori were not alone in their rebellion in 19th century Aotearoa (New Zealand). Though often ignored or simply dismissed as unsavoury or deranged by historians, there were Pākehā (Europeans) who rebelled against injustices they endured or witnessed at the time. Their stories shed light on our understanding of early Pākehā society.

Many histories downplay or simply ignore the conflict present between Pākehā in this early period with social interactions often being depicted simplistically in a blatant attempt to create the notion of a shared Pākehā history.

However, Victorian Britain, and by extension, the colonial society that was established in Aotearoa, was deeply divided along class lines. In turn, enormous pressure was placed on those from the lower rungs of society to create the wealth, fight the wars to suppress Māori resistance, conform to the social norms, and abide by the laws written by those who benefited so well from this arrangement.

As a result some Pākehā rebelled and what follows are accounts of the experiences of a handful of these individuals, whom I refer to as Pākehā rebels.

Early Pakeha Rebels

To begin we must go back to a time, as Frederick Manning puts it, ‘before Governors were invented, and law, and justice, and all that. When everyone did as he liked—except when his neighbours would not let him, (the more shame for them)—when there were no taxes, or duties, or public works or public to require them, [when] money was useless and might go a begging.’

This was a time when missionaries arrived in Aotearoa to exert their perceived religious superiority; whalers and sealers came to exploit the area’s natural resources, and the very first non-Māori took up residence in Aotearoa.

Made up of runaway seamen, escaped convicts from the Australian penal colony, and individuals who came to trade with Māori tribes, the initial residents of non-Māori descent came to be known as Pākehā-Māori. Spread widely with relatively large populations at the extreme ends of the land,¹ Pākehā-Māori lived within Māori communities and many effectively became Māori. They filled different positions in Māori society—some rising to the rank of rangatira (chief), some un-

1. One estimate puts the number of Pākehā-Māori in 1840 at 150, though this does not take into account those who had come and left by that time.

dergoing rigorous spiritual training to occupy the position of tohunga (priest/expert/shaman) while most filled the role of taurekareka (slave).²

Among their number, and based in the far north, was Jacky Marmon. Born in Sydney at around the turn of the century, Marmon was convicted of a petty crime in 1823 and was sentenced to two years hard labour. Of this time Marmon commented,

‘I was a convict, had my hair shaved, lost my own name and passed current muster under the meaningless title of 356. I was set to road making. Day after day passed in the monotonous round up of work until my very soul was sick and I longed for death to free me from my misery.’

From road making Marmon was transferred to serve out the remainder of his sentence on board government ships, an opportunity he used to escape somewhere on the coast of Aotearoa in 1824. However, Aotearoa was not unfamiliar territory to Marmon; he had lived with different Māori tribes on two separate occasions. He became a highly prized trader under the chief Kawhitiwai, and also acted as a tohunga accompanying Hongi Hika on the warrior-chief’s war raids across Te Ika a Maui (the North Island).

Marmon’s prior experience enabled him to transition quickly into the Māori world. Shortly after his arrival Marmon was conversing in Te Reo (the Māori language) and married a Hikutu woman with whom he had children. Some say he was marked with a moko (tattoo). His re-invention was so complete that in 1827 he was seen

firing at a British ship to take utu (payment, compensation, revenge) for the crew’s mistreatment of women from his hapū (sub-tribe).

Of his transition he commented,

‘This was the last time I put faith in my own race—the Pākehās. Henceforth I am Māori in thought, word and deed, since among the savages I have found more true faithfulness man to man, than in the boasted European: there is no honour in them. Their hearts are as false as a rotten kumara. No more of them for me, their very language I abhor, and would not use it were it not to shower my maledictions on them.’

In his new life Marmon achieved a position of some importance. He acted as a negotiator and interpreter between Māori and traders, the latter arriving en-masse to the Hokianga Harbour in the late 1820s to access timber from the surrounding forests. Marmon capitalised on the increased numbers of Pākehā by supplying them with alcohol made from potato and kumara, the sale of which financially benefitted his tribe. He also accompanied Hongi Hika once again on Ngā Puhī’s raids to the south.

However, his life was not purely booze and war. Marmon describing his own as a docile domestic life as,

‘I lived quietly with my wives, raising quite a colony of children. I went fishing in the bay for kahawai when the thought struck me. I did a little potato planting and kumara cultivation in season. I snared or shot birds. I tried boat building, and when all things failed, had my pipe to fall back upon though tobacco was represented by dried koromiko leaves.’

During the 1830s Marmon somewhat reconnected with the Pākehā world, helping Bishop Pompallier to establish a Catholic mission in the Hokianga. However he firmly remained a Pākehā rebel, flouting all forms of British authority in-

2. Though some slaves met a horrific demise in this position, the term needn’t be equated with untold suffering and misery as it is when relating to chattel slavery. James Cowan explained the experience of one Pākehā-Māori as follows: ‘it was a slavery that had its privileges and compensations, and there were long days of abundant food and little work, in the intervals between the seasons of communal labour...’

cluding that of Thomas McDonald who, as well as James Busby, was an official British resident at the time.

McDonald was infuriated by Marmon's refusal to hand over two convict stowaways to whom Marmon was providing refuge. Such actions, which left McDonald with little recourse but writing letters to his superiors decrying the lack of law and order in the Hokianga, resulted in Marmon being described by Reverend James Stack as 'perhaps one of the most dangerous characters an Englishman can meet in this land.'

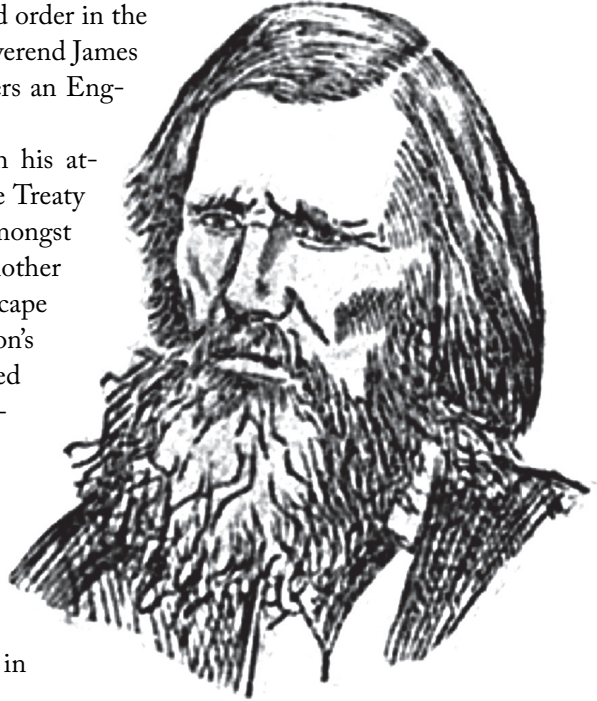
Marmon's notoriety grew in official circles with his attempts to dissuade Hokianga Māori from signing the Treaty of Waitangi, a position that was quite common amongst Pākehā-Māori at the time. Frederick Manning, another Pākehā-Māori who had settled in the Hokianga to escape the 'straps and strings of civilisation,' shared Marmon's position telling William Hobson that he had advised Māori to resist the British proposals because he believed European colonisation would degrade them.

Meanwhile chiefs from Kaitaia, after having signed the document, told British officials 'that they had been informed by the Pākehās that [his] Excellency would take away their lands and make them slaves.' Unfortunately, these sentiments from men like Marmon, which turned out to be prophetic in nature, often fell on deaf ears.

In the mid 1840s Marmon, with the rest of his tribe, fought alongside the government as kūpapa Māori (those who fought on the side of the Crown) in opposition to the rebellion of Hone Heke, Kawiti and others from Ngā Puhi. Although this complicity with a government venture may seem like a change of heart, it did not represent Marmon turning his back on the anti-British lifestyle he had established. Rather, his involvement in the fighting highlights his level of commitment to his hapū as he fought in order to fulfil his role in that structure.

Following the fighting in the far north, Marmon slipped into relative obscurity. His economic fortunes took a turn for the worse as the Hokianga timber trade collapsed and the remainder of his days were spent quietly in the Hokianga with his community.

However, his challenge to the social norms of the time were such that Pākehā parents in the far north would threaten wayward children with a visit from Jacky Marmon, the genuine bogeyman, right up until his death in 1880.



Jacky Marmon

Rebel O Te Waipounamu

By the 1850s, Te Waipounamu (the South Island) was a very different place than Te Ika a Maui. Annexed by Governor Hobson on the 21st May 1840 by right of discovery, the whole of Te Waipounamu was under Pākehā control before the Land Wars of the 1860s had even begun.

With the land securely in the possession of wealthy Pākehā, the colonial society of the south took on a form more reminiscent of Britain as the unequal relationship between the landless majority and the landed few was solidified. Upset by this recreation of a society many had come to Aotearoa to escape, the arrival of a man who challenged the authority of the powerful and wealthy was met with enthusiasm.

Born in Scotland in 1820, James Mackenzie immigrated to Australia in 1849 and arrived in Nelson a few years later. He worked his way down the island on a number of farms but on the 4th of March 1855 a young station overseer out searching for missing sheep in the back country came across Mackenzie, his dog Friday and a flock of over 1,000 stolen sheep.³

Mackenzie was apprehended by the overseer and his two companions but managed to escape and walked 100 miles to Lyttleton where he was apprehended once again, this time by the police.

In April Mackenzie was charged and found guilty of theft and sentenced to five years of hard labour building roads. Not one to tolerate confinement he escaped twice in the first two months of his sentence and as a result was placed in irons and carefully monitored.

During his ordeal Mackenzie won the admiration of the landless population who lived on the margins of genteel colonial society. His defiance of the wealthy land owners, in addition to his disdain for the justice system, made him a popular symbol of rebellion and an inspiration for many.

Mackenzie came to be known by sight and there are many stories of people approaching him as he worked in a road gang. Young children would gather around and offer him small gifts. A man once approached him and placed a string of sausages around his neck. People would often throw flowers at his feet, and one popular story tells of a barmaid who gave him a few swigs from a whiskey bottle.

Largely as a result of this popular support, Mackenzie's case was revisited and flaws in both the police inquiry and the original trial were found. He was pardoned in January 1856 and fled, never to be heard from again.

With his disappearance the myths which had started to build around this quiet, solitary man whose only friend seemed to be his dog Friday, continued unabated. People talked of his superhuman strength, his naked baths in ice-cold rivers and his barbaric, arrogant indifference towards the establishment.

In the end it became difficult to distinguish myth from reality; however, that hardly seemed to matter. His tale had become more than a simple act of defiance by an individual. Rather, it had become a symbol of rebellion against the powerful, and the myth of Mackenzie offered hope to many.

Pakeha Rebels join Maori Rebels

As the numbers of settlers swelled in the second half of the 19th century, land speculators in Te

3. He was found in the area that now bears his name — Mackenzie Country.

Ika a Maui looked to access the land still under Māori control in order to cash in on the increased demand for land. However the transition of land from Māori to Pākehā control had started to slow with the advent of pan-tribal initiatives such as pupuri whenua, the coordinated restriction of land sales used to great effect by Wiremu Kingi in Taranaki and the Kingitanga movement.⁴

To meet this new challenge the government, at the behest of the land speculators, employed the use of legislation and a fighting force made up overwhelmingly of poor people to gain control of the land.

Māori however did not take this assault to their sovereignty lying down. Over the next three decades many struggled to retain their land, their mana (authority/power/prestige) and their rights against a force described by Frederick Manning as, 'Plutus with golden hoof' trampling on Māori land.⁵

Although small in number, Māori were joined in their struggle by a number of Pākehā who, while being motivated by different factors and assisting in different ways, all challenged the colonial status quo at great personal risk. The following is an overview of some of their experiences.

William Moffatt was one such Pākehā. He was an ex-armed constabulary Scotsman, described as being both 'tired of civilization' and a clever mechanic who began living with Māori near modern day Taumaranui in the early 1860s. He married a Māori woman and put his considerable practical talents to work helping to construct

and work Māori flour mills in the area. However, as Te Riri Pākehā⁶ gripped the central area of Te Ika a Maui, his hapū fell in behind the Kingitanga and his skills were put to use producing gun powder.

Moffatt made this powder using charcoal that he burnt himself, sulphur he sourced from the Tongariro volcanic area, and potassium nitrate from Whanganui. As these ingredients were reasonably accessible, he managed to produce enough to keep the Kingitanga forces stocked throughout the war. He later supplied both Titokowaru and Te Kooti with gunpowder for their campaigns.

Arthur Desmond was more hands off in his role in the Māori struggle, actively supporting Māori from within the Pākehā world. He admired what he saw as the natural communism of the Māori people and in particular their communal approach to land ownership. Being an anti-capitalist himself, Desmond was motivated to support the Māori with the belief that Māori and working class Pākehā shared a common oppressor in the form of wealthy Pākehā.

On one occasion he openly supported Te Kooti's wish to visit his [Te Kooti's] place of birth, a stance which placed Desmond in direct opposition to a group of armed settlers who had established a movement to foster opposition to the visit. Desmond attended the movement's meetings and wrote letters to newspapers decrying that the 'whole agitation is a sham' promoted by local land speculators against Te Kooti, a man who believed 'in using land for the production of wealth, but

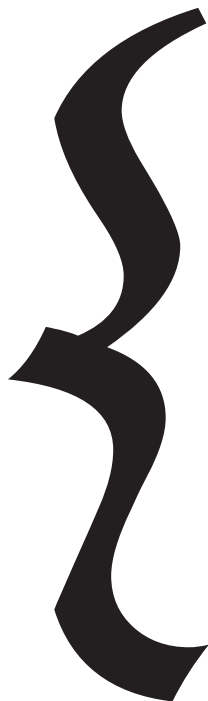
4. A pan-tribal movement established in 1858 with the underlying aim of retaining Māori land holdings.

5. Plutus is, in Greek mythology, the god of riches.

6. This was the term some Māori used to describe what Pākehā knew as the Waikato campaign. It means 'The White Man's Rage.'

not in buying and selling it like a pig' for profit. For his trouble Desmond was ousted from the meetings, on one occasion being lucky to escape with his life.

In the end the visit did not take place as Te Kooti was arrested en route by the government. Desmond's support for Te Kooti remained, and a poem he wrote about the guerrilla leader appeared in a Sydney newspaper shortly after the arrest. The following are excerpts from that poem.



The Pākehās come with their rum and their gold,
And soon the broad lands of our fathers were sold,
But the voice of Te Kooti said: 'HOLD THE LAND! HOLD!!'
Exult for Te Kooti, yo-hoo!

...

The Eternal's our father, the land is our mother,
The forest and mountains our sister and brother,
Who'd part with his birthright for gold to another?
Exult for Te Kooti, yo-hoo!

We won't sell the land, it's the gift of the Lord,
Except it be bought with the blood drinking sword,
But ALL men are welcome to share in its hoard, —
Exult for Te Kooti, yo-hoo!

Other Pākehā rebels contributed to the Māori struggle by deserting from the government forces and fighting alongside Māori. Their actual number is almost impossible to determine, and details of their lives are limited, though included in their ranks were James Cockburn, Jack Hennessey, Charles Kane and Michael O'Connor.

The experiences of these men vary from case to case. Some fought with the Māori for a short time before re-crossing the battle lines, sometimes after having betrayed those who had offered them refuge. Others remained with their adopted community after the conflict and in some cases, until their deaths decades later.

However, one point of commonality exists between many of these men: most of those who fought alongside Māori at this time were Irish Catholic. They were from a population who had suffered at the hands of the British as the Māori now were. They had been dispossessed of their land, seen their livelihoods lost, their communities destroyed, and suffered the ravages of famine and economic recession. As a result of these experiences, anti-British sentiment was common and was manifested in the political movement of Fenianism.⁷ Fenian Irishmen were held accountable for attacks against symbols of British authority around the world at this time, and it appears likely that many of those who fought alongside Māori were Fenian Irishmen or, at the very least, had Fenian sympathies.

It is also conceivable that some Irish Catholics took up arms alongside Māori due to a sense of solidarity resulting from the shared experiences of the two populations. An account of an incident following a battle at Te Ngaio, Taranaki in 1865 gives credibility to this suggestion. Morgan C. Grace, a doctor who wrote a short history on this period to which he was an eyewitness, explains that following the battle which saw Māori heavily outnumbered, General Duncan Cameron asked a surviving Māori why he and his comrades had continued to resist against such impossible odds. To which the Māori responded:

‘What would you have us do? This is our village; these are our plantations. Men are not

fit to live if they are not brave enough to defend their homes.’

Upon hearing of this, Grace explains, many of the soldiers lost all interest in fighting. He overheard one Irish Catholic say:

‘Begorra, it’s a murder to shoot them. Sure they are our own people with their potatoes and fish, and children. Who knows but they are Irishmen, with faces a little darkened by the sun, who escaped during the persecutions of Cromwell!’

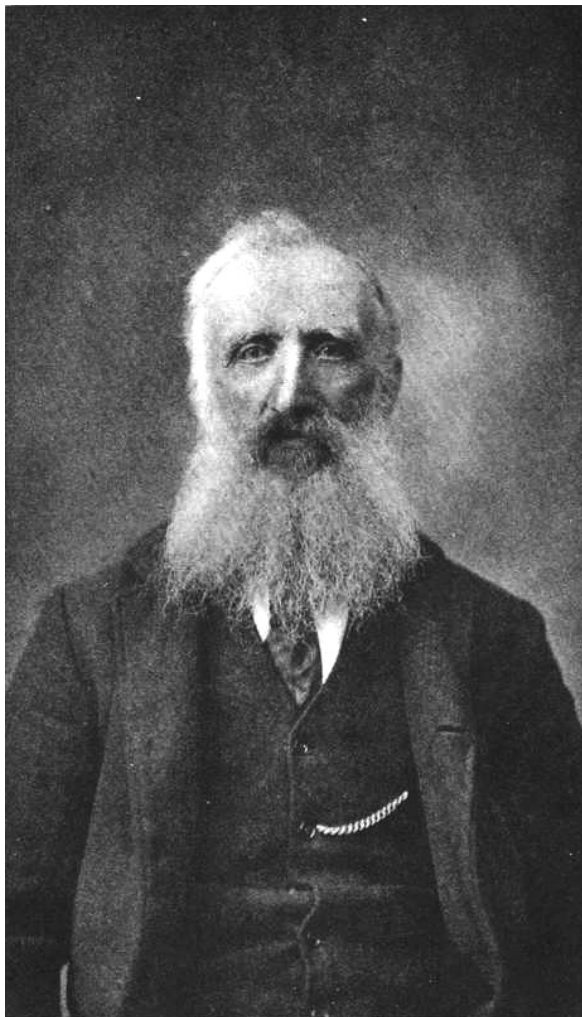
This well known comment highlights the feelings of one man after hearing of the way Māori valiantly defended their communities. Given the fact that this fellow would almost certainly have experienced similar injustices at the hands of the British as those men who ended up fighting alongside Māori forces, it seems fair to extrapolate that some of those who joined the Māori would have shared similar sentiments of solidarity and commonality.

Although he never actually took up arms against the colonial forces, one Pākehā rebel who joined the Māori in their struggle, and about whom we know a great deal, is Kimble Bent. Born in the USA in 1837, he joined the Queen’s 57th regiment in 1859, and following a stint in India, found himself in Aotearoa to suppress what the government was calling Hauhau fanaticism.⁸

By June 1865, however, Bent had grown so tired of the military life, which he described as

7. Fenianism was a form of Irish nationalism that had as its goal the establishment of an independent Irish republic.

8. The term Hauhau was the common term used by Pākehā to refer to followers of the Pai-marire faith, led by the prophet Te Ua Haumene. The faith came about as a response to the confiscation of land afflicting many Māori following the Waikato and Tauranga campaigns. The term Hauhau comes from the battle cry ‘Hapa Pai-marire Hau! Hau!’



Kimble Bent, 1903

irksome beyond words, that he deserted into the Taranaki bush and sought refuge with the adherents of Pai-marire.

In time Bent learnt Te Reo, married a chief's niece, was rechristened Ringiringi, and adapted to the Māori way of life. Of this life Bent explained that at times the Māori notion of hard work pushed him to his physical limits, though he commented that hard work was the responsibility of the whole community, from taurekareka to rangatira and not the drudgery of the lower orders of society alone.

What's more, the periods of hard work were broken up by abundant food and little labour as described by James Cowan who spoke to Bent in detail about his life:

'There were periods of halcyon, lazy days in Māoridom, when Ringiringi [Bent] and his ragged comrades of the bush ... could just "lie around" and smoke and eat, and take no thought for the morrow so long as they could procure a pipe-full of strong torori (tobacco) and a square meal of potatoes and pork.'

A few years after deserting from the military, Bent's life took another dramatic turn with the onset of what has become known as Titokowaru's War. In mid 1868 his hapū joined many from the Ngāti Ruanui iwi (tribe) at Titokowaru's home village of Te Ngutu O Te Manu, and shortly thereafter the conflict began.

At around this time Titokowaru proclaimed that Bent was tapu (sacred) and in turn was not permitted to fight. In addition, the chief explained that:

'Ringiringi is henceforth my moko-puna—my grandchild—and I now give him another name, the name of one of my ancestors. His name is now Tui-nui-a-moa.'

Although he didn't play an active role in the fighting, Bent still played an important part in his iwi's war efforts. During the battles he would es-

cort non-combatants to safe sites, often carrying with him a pouch of Titokowaru's taonga (treasure, possession) to prevent it from falling into the hands of the government. He also used his limited army medical experience to tend the wounds of his comrades injured in battle.

Bent also filled the role of armourer making cartridges and procuring bullets when necessary. To make cartridges Bent would roll old newspapers or pages torn from books around a wooden cartridge filler, making a tight cylinder which was then secured with flax. The filler was then removed and the make-shift cartridge was filled with gun powder.

As for bullets, they were usually plentiful being sourced from sympathetic or enterprising Pākehā or kūpapa Māori who had received the bullets from the government. However, from time to time they were hard to come by and Bent would use old iron, stones and even pieces of hard wood cut to the correct dimensions to substitute for bullets.

For eight months during 1868 and 1869, Bent was involved in Ngāti Ruanui's war effort; preparing cartridges, mourning the deaths of his comrades and celebrating their successes. Meanwhile, the government and the settler community of Aotearoa was thrown into a panic as Titokowaru and his allies reclaimed more land than at any other time during the Land Wars. However, this all came to an abrupt end in early 1869 when Ngāti Ruanui and their allies deserted Tauranga Ika on the eve of battle.⁹

9. As for why the pā (village) was deserted, it falls outside the scope of this article to explain something which remains contested by many historians. However, James

Bent fled into the Taranaki bush with Titokowaru and his followers, hotly pursued by government forces. After a pursuit which lasted 10 days, during which time Bent and most of his comrades managed to evade capture and death, they found refuge in the communities of sympathetic Māori where Bent remained for a number of years.

Bent's life gained some continuity as he settled down and learnt a great deal about Māori spirituality. He trained as a tohunga, and became so accomplished that during a trip to Kawhia he met Tawhaio, the second Māori King, who requested Bent remain with him in this capacity. Undoubtedly flattered, Bent refused the offer preferring to return to his home in Taranaki where he lived alongside his Māori comrades into his old age only returning to the Pākehā world to die in 1916.

In conclusion

From Marmon to MacKenzie, Moffatt to Desmond, the Irish Catholic soldiers to Kimble Bent, the lives discussed above offer an alternative narrative to the shared Pākehā history commonly associated with this period.

Early Pākehā society was deeply divided along class lines, and as a result, a small portion of the population was content with the status quo while the majority were forced into subservience, fighting and dying in wars, turning the wheels of production, and obeying the norms and laws established by the powerful with little to show for their efforts.

Belich's *I Shall Not Die* (pp.242-244) offers an interesting discussion on the topic.

Not content with this reality, some Pākehā rebelled. Their rebellions challenged British social norms, property rights, military discipline, the crown's authority in Aotearoa and other facets of a society they would not or could not tolerate.

Although their number is small, the value of their actions is much larger. They provide a starting point for a Pākehā tradition of rebellion which predates the working class struggle of the late 19th century, a period which saw the first mass rebellion in Pākehā history.

In addition, their stories stand as a testament to the actions of those now forgotten by history. Many others would have reacted to the oppressive forces in their lives, participating in small-scale resistance to make their lives more tolerable. Thus the stories of Pākehā rebels act as a tribute to all those who challenged the powerful so that they and others could live with a degree of dignity. ■

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palestine in pieces

—ALI

IT'S TWO IN THE AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 2008. I'm on the couch, finishing off a plate of hommous, when Micah walks in and informs me that we're at war. At approximately one am that morning, the Israeli Air Force began bombing Gaza.

It's important to note this moment, because around the world, the Western capitalist media will print photos of crying Palestinian mothers in bombed out buildings side by side with photos of crying Israeli mothers in bombed out buildings. As if there's some kind of symmetry of suffering here. As if this is a case of two sides being equally violent and stubborn.



There is no symmetry here. While I've been enjoying the sunshine, playing with the dog and eating lunch, 125 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza. By the end of the day that number has risen to 225. By the time this war is over the number of Palestinians killed in Gaza is 1385 — the number of Israelis killed is thirteen, three of them civilians. Two of those three are Palestinian citizens of Israel.

THE EVENING OF THAT FIRST DAY, we assemble outside the Cinematheque in Tel Aviv for an emergency protest. There are thousands of us, Jews, Palestinians and international solidarity activists. There's a samba band banging drums and blowing whistles. There are people waving Palestinian flags.

There are so many cops. Cops on horses. Cops from the border police. Cops with guns. I'm terrified.

We march towards the Kirya, Israeli Defense Force headquarters. The plan is to disrupt the prime minister's press conference. Unsurprisingly, the cops attack us and the march is diverted. We end up standing across the road from the Kirya, yelling our frustration at a line of mounted cops.

The next day I'm supposed to be going to a meeting of the clown army, the Smile Liberation Front, but the meeting is cancelled at the last minute.

'Why?'

'You Don't Want To Know', Assaf tells me. Earlier that day Mohamed Khawaja and Arafat Khawaja were shot in the West Bank village of Niatlin during a protest in solidarity with Gaza.¹ Nobody is in the mood for clowns or smiles right now.

Instead, we go to another demo, much smaller than yesterday. Maybe a hundred or so people, fenced in by the cops, waving signs and shouting rhymes. I think the police are really here for our protection, because behind them is a mob of very patriotic and very angry civilians. Some wave Israeli flags, some throw stuff, some just yell at us: we are traitors, we are a fifth column, we should move to Gaza, we should go back to Auschwitz. I'm sure somebody's gonna get beaten up on the way home.

BECAUSE IT IS HANUKKAH,² the military decides the new war needs a festive name. A name like... Operation Cast Lead, a reference to a popular Hanukkah song about a kid whose dad gives him a cast lead dreidl³ as a holiday present. If this were fiction it would constitute brilliant satire.

MY TRIP TO BEIT SAHOUR is also my first time in Area A of the Occupied Territories, ostensibly the Autonomous Palestinian Territories — little islands on the map, surrounded by checkpoints and roadblocks and the IDF. Technically it's illegal for Israeli citizens to enter these areas, but I flash



my New Zealand passport at the soldier staffing the checkpoint and he doesn't even look inside.

The Alternative Information Centre (AIC) is a joint Palestinian-Israeli social justice organization with offices in West Jerusalem and in Beit Sahour. The AIC has been holding daily vigils in Suk Shaab, the town centre, since the war started, so we stand around a fire holding black flags (for mourning, not anarchism) and Palestinian flags. There's about 50 people here, locals and internationals. There's a blurry video projecting onto a blank billboard. A couple of small children dance around with flags.

Afterwards we eat dinner at a local restaurant where Al Jazeera plays footage of the Gaza carnage on a giant monitor over our heads. Mohammed is recommending tourist sights I should check out in Israel. He asks about my religion: Am I Christian? Jewish? I awkwardly stumble around the question, 'I'm not religious.'

'It's the best way,' he nods approvingly.

The next morning we get up at 5am so that we can get through the checkpoint in time for my travel buddy Rachel to make her 7:30 appointment in Jerusalem. The Bethlehem checkpoint AKA 'Checkpoint 300' is a high security checkpoint, a terrifying maze of gates and fences and machinery that looks like something out of a dystopian science fiction flick.

Hundreds of people, almost all of them men, are lined up waiting to go through to work in Israel. Some of them have come from as far south as Hebron, meaning they've already been commuting for several hours.

The taxi driver who drove us here explained that because we are women, we should cut to the front of the line. This is confusing, because I'm not sure if he means that the men will let us go ahead of them out of chivalry, or because it would be culturally inappropriate for women to stand in line with men. In the end, the men insist on us passing ahead of them in the queue. I feel crap for cutting in line but decide that being culturally offensive is worse, so I hold onto Rachel's arm and we squeeze our way past in the narrow confines of the fenced corridor.

We get to the centre of the checkpoint. The men in front of us have waited in the cold for hours. Now they are finally being processed. First a soldier checks their work permits, then they get scanned by the 'automatic biometric access control system,' then their bags are x-rayed. Finally, they are allowed through to the other side, where they board the bus to Jerusalem.

For Rachel and me, with our white skin and Minority World passports, the experience is quite different. We just flash our passports at the soldier (again I breath a sigh of relief that they didn't look inside and figure out I'm an Israeli citizen) and walk

straight out. No biometric scan for me. We board the bus to Damascus Gate, and I spend a sleepy morning getting lost outside the Old City. Nothing that I've seen here should shock me. I already knew all about the checkpoints, the house demolitions, the wall, the land theft, the racism in every part of life... but it's so much more real when you meet the people that have to live with this day after day.

TO GET TO ABED'S FARM we drive towards the Jerusalem train station, past the biblical zoo, and through a small checkpoint staffed by two soldiers. Getting through is no problem, the checkpoint leads to a Jewish settlement, and the car has an Israeli license plate. About ten meters after the checkpoint we turn left, drive up a steep incline and we're there.

Abed Rabba is a small scale farmer, he grows olives and ful on a hilly bit of land that belongs to his family. A few years ago Abed started hosting the All Nations Café on his land. He took advantage of the fact that Walaja is currently one of the few West Bank areas accessible to both Israelis and West Bank Palestinians, and created a space where people could come together for coffee, tea, music and dialogue.

From this a small of community of Israelis (Jewish and Palestinian), West Bank Palestinians and internationals was built. Abed is now working to turn his land into a space where people can learn about sustainable agriculture and peaceful co-existence. He hosts regular skill shares, and a farmers' market where local farmers can sell their produce.

The municipal government will not issue Abed with a building permit to build a house on his own land — a common tactic used to drive Palestinians off their land — so his family live in Deheishe refugee camp. Meanwhile he lives in a small cave on his land and looks after the farm. His reasoning is that the government can't issue a demolition order on a cave. There is no electricity or running water here. He has a woodburner in his cave, and a wind up charger for his cellphone. He gets water from a

nearby spring on donkeyback, or relies on friends who have a car.

Abed's farm is part of al Walaja, a West Bank village which has been annexed as part of 'Greater Jerusalem.' Walaja is one of many Palestinian communities that will be on the Israeli side of the West Bank Segregation Wall once the wall is completed. Already over half the village's land has had Jewish settlements built on it, and another settlement is in the works. The private company building the settlement has bought the surrounding land from its owners, Palestinian refugees in Jordan who are not allowed to come home to their land anyway. Now they are trying to gain control of Abed's land as well.

Abed is refusing to sell his ancestral lands, and has been subject to all kinds of harassment because of it, such as soldiers dumping the waste from the checkpoint's chemical toilet on his land. He has also been issued a demolition order for his cave and is in the process of challenging it in the Israeli courts. His friends are pledging to organize a political campaign to resist the demolition.⁴

Later, we get a tour of the rest of the village.

We go to visit Fatima and Saed and their six kids. They own a glasshouse where they grow lettuce, cucumbers, ful and peppers (organic by necessity, they can't afford chemical pesticides or fertilizers). There's also some chickens, a dog, and a couple of donkeys. When the Segregation Wall is finished, it will run straight through their property. Their house will be on the Palestinian side of the wall. Their glasshouse and stable — just a few meters away — will be on the Israeli side. They will lose their means of subsistence.

Of course Saed and Fatima are fighting to stop this. They've taken their case to the courts to have the wall rerouted around their land. Like all court cases, this is a lengthy time consuming process, and even when Palestinians succeed and the court orders the army to change the wall's route (which happened in the village of Bil'in) it can still take several years for the army to act on court rulings.

Saed and Fatima's situation isn't unique. It's part of a conscious effort to Judaize Greater Jerusalem by making life so unbearable for Palestinians that they're forced to leave. The aim is to change the demographics of the population so that in future negotiations for a two state solution Israel can claim Greater Jerusalem as its territory on the grounds of its majority Jewish population.

THE ENTIRE COUNTRY has been infected with war fervour. At the train station TV monitors broadcast aerial shots of bombs being dropped on Gaza, on the bus the radio blares the latest patriotic commentary. Anyone who lives within rocket-fire range of Gaza is suddenly a national martyr. Everywhere I look I see banners declaring that 'our hearts are with the south.' People across the country are taking in families escaping the rocket fire (there is no escape for Gazans, the borders are closed on all sides). On the telly at my uncle's house an eminent mathematician teaches complex mathematical formulae to the children of Sderot.⁵

The police are cracking down on anti-war activists. And as always, it is Palestinian citizens, not Jews, who are targeted. Within the first four days of the war 200 Palestinian citizens of Israel are in jail. By the end of the war 832 people, Palestinians and Jews, have been detained — 80% of them are held in custody until all proceedings against them have been completed. Interestingly, all detainees in the Northern Districts, an area with a large Palestinian Israeli population, are detained without bail. Meanwhile in Tel Aviv, the stronghold of the Jewish left, everyone gets bail.

It's clear that the police are using arrests as a tactic to disperse perfectly legal protests. The new grounds for arrest are that 'the protests are detrimental to public morale.' As far as they are concerned all protests are 'a threat to the existence or security of the state.'⁶ I wish I felt that optimistic.

In several instances police use force to disperse demonstrations on the grounds that activists are 'participating in a forbidden gathering.' Israel has strict laws controlling freedom of assembly, but these demonstrations did not meet the legal criteria for public gatherings which require a police permit. It's striking that the police repression is so over the top that the cops are breaking their own already repressive laws.

The Shabak, the General Security Services, get in on the action too. Protest organizers are called in for questioning and threatened with prosecution. They are told they will be held responsible for any criminal offenses committed during demonstrations.

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And as always, it is Palestinian citizens, not Jews, who are targeted...

The new grounds for arrest are that 'the protests are detrimental to public morale.'

As far as they are concerned all protests are 'A THREAT TO THE EXISTENCE OF SECURITY OR THE STATE.'

Not to be outdone, universities do their part to police students. Haifa University actually invites mounted police officers to come disperse Palestinian Israeli students protesting against the war. The university later takes disciplinary action against those students for their ‘unseemly conduct’ and ‘participation in unapproved public activity.’

AT THE AIRPORT I’M PICKED OUT to have my bags x-rayed, then searched. The security guards find a Palestine souvenir keychain. I try to bluff my way out of it, innocently explain that it was a gift from a tourist vendor, that I only kept it because I thought it was funny. One of the guards sternly informs me that actually It Is Not Funny, It Is Very Sad. They keep searching: a kaffiyeh, a Palestine guidebook, a collection of leftwing dvds, a printout of the international Jewish anti Zionist charter — let’s face it, none of it particularly militant or dangerous.

They call their boss over to come yell at me. He demands to know why I have these things and where I got them. I play dumb. He makes a show of getting his underlings to search my property and person for explosives, confiscates my laptop so that it too can be ‘checked for explosives.’ He also takes the vegan food I’ve packed for my flight and makes me check it in with the rest of my luggage.

These are small punitive measures that have nothing to do with passengers’ or national security and everything to do with the fact that I’ve pissed him off. It could be funny, except I’m tired and scared of missing my flight. He waits til the last minute and then instructs one of the guards to escort me onto the plane.

I have an eighteen hour stopover in Adis Ababa, and the airline puts me in a hotel room. I lock the door behind me, collapse into bed, and burst into tears.

I hate borders. I hate nation states. I hate governments and politicians and soldiers and customs officers and flag waving patriotic mobs. Of course, I hated all of these things yesterday. I hated them last

week, I hated them ten years ago. I haven’t learned anything new about the world while I’ve been here.

But right now it grips me physically. I want to cry and scream and throw things. I’m overpowered by childlike frustration at the unfairness of it, at my powerlessness to fix it, at the paralyzing fear I feel, just by knowing that this is what the world is like. ■

Note: With the exception of Abed Rabba and Arafat and Mohamed Khawaja, all names have been changed.

1. Arafat died almost instantly. Mohamed died in hospital several days later.
2. Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday commemorating the successful resistance of Ancient Judeans to foreign Assyrian occupation. Irony much?
3. A dreidl is four sided spinning top used to play gambling games, one of the traditions of Hanukkah.
4. The last I heard, IDF soldiers entered the property and destroyed Abed’s belongings while he was visiting his family in Deheishe, despite the fact that the matter was still going through the courts.
5. Sderot is a city in the south of Israel, near Gaza, its population mostly consists of new immigrants — most recently from the former Soviet Union — who were settled there by the government. Governments start wars and poor people get bombs dropped on them, am I seeing a pattern?
6. See the report published by Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, titled ‘Prohibited Protest’ and available on their website www.adalah.org.



‘Our children have evidently benefited from a special treatment, locked in darkness for 108 hours, some of them without any charges, and to justify this we are told that they must be very special people, the kind that one doesn’t find on any street corner. Yet at the same time we are reminded that they are actually very normal, for everyday they become more numerous, and take up positions at every one of your street corners.’

— *the parents of Bertrand, Mathieu, Elsa, Aria and Yldune of the Tarnac 9*

a thousand subterfuges

— HENRIETTA

'SPECIAL TREATMENT.' I LIKE THAT PHRASE. In the case above, the special treatment kicked in when anti-terror forces raided a small village of Tarnac in southern France and imprisoned nine people for conspiracy to cause terrorist acts. Apparently the accused had (non-lethally) sabotaged a train line in protest of nuclear waste transport, authored subversive texts, and worse still '... adopted underground methods. They never use mobile telephones, and they live in areas where it is very difficult for the police to gather information without being spotted. They have managed to have, in the village of Tarnac, friendly relations with people who can warn them of the presence of strangers.'—Minister of the Interior, Madame Alliot-Marie

But as the parents of the Tarnac 9 pointed out, the treatment their children were subjected to is actually not so special. In the months leading up to the raid on Tarnac, six other autonomists were arrested in Paris on charges of forming terrorist organisations. The first instance was the arrests of Ivan, Bruno and Damien as they made their way to a demonstration at an immigration prison. They had ingredients in their car for smoke bombs, and nails to put on the roads to stop traffic. The police say they were planning on using this to make nail bombs. One week later Isa, Farid and later on Juan were arrested after DNA traces were apparently found on bottles of petrol underneath police vans.

Special treatment is happening everywhere. In the USA in January 2009, Marie Mason was sentenced to 21 years in prison, for 'eco-terrorism.' She is accused of arson that caused about \$1 million in damage to genetic-engineering research at Michigan State University—a fire admittedly effective in destroying the project but which neither injured nor killed anyone.

This sentence follows of the conviction and sentencing of seven SHAC animal rights activists in England to a total of 50 years prison. Heather N. was jailed for 11 years, Gregg and Natasha A.

to nine, Gavin M.H. to eight, Daniel W. for five, Dan Amos and another were both sentenced to four years in prison. The charges are conspiracy with persons 'known and unknown' to blackmail Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS). Branded as terrorists in the courts and media, they were never accused of torching cars or sending nasty letters to vivisectionists or even having met with the people who did. Running a public aboveground campaign against HLS was enough. They also all have lifetime anti-social orders prohibiting them from any anti-vivisection protest. Six people were also imprisoned in the United States for conspiracy to shut down HLS. Like the defendants in the UK, they are not actually accused of having personally engaged in blowing things up nor of threatening to do so—posting reports about underground actions on campaign websites was enough to send them to prison for domestic terrorism.

But back to Europe, back to 2008, ten animal rights activists in Austria were intensively surveilled before their houses were raided and they were imprisoned for three and a half months. They are charged with 'formation of a criminal body' and are now on trial. What exactly this criminal body has supposedly done is not clear, not even to the accused. Nor is the extent of the surveillance against them. 'Investigations are continuing.' Clear however is that they were kept in prison so long because they refused to make statements against each other and refused to give up passwords to encrypted documents.

Germany is also well-practised in hunting down dissidents. In Berlin, Florian L., Oliver R. and Axel H. have just been convicted of being members of the 'Militant Group,' after initially being arrested and imprisoned for 'forming a terrorist association.' The government had to drop the terror charges, but what is notable in this case is that it's one of the few in which the accused are alleged to be in a group that has actually 'done things' beyond conspiracy. But even here they are

accused of only one action—attempting to set a military vehicle on fire. They are not on trial for the 24 other actions attributed to the Militant Group, which include burning cars of the border police and arson attacks against police stations and courts. Instead they are accused of one act of sabotage and membership of the Militant Group. This is despite extensive surveillance for more than a year including email and phone interceptions, bugging, filming the entrances on the houses and in internet cafes, using GPS to track movements.

This surveillance went beyond what is legal in Germany and was continued even though it found nothing to connect the accused with the original suspicions. Why? It all hangs on the idea of conspiratorial behaviour. It *'coincides with the following logic: If no clues are found that substantiate the suspicions, the accused is behaving conspiratorially, which then strengthens the suspicion.'* —Statement by the accused and their supporters 08.05.2008

What is it to behave in a conspiratorial way? Cloaked meetings in dark alleyways, code-words and secret knocks?

Dr Andrej Holm was arrested in Berlin just a few hours after Florian, Axel and Oliver, accused of forming a terrorist group with them. Dr Matthias B. and two others were also subject to house-raids on the same grounds but not taken into custody. According to the arrest warrant against Dr. Andrej Holm the charges of membership of a terrorist group was justified on the following grounds:

Dr. Matthias B. is alleged to have used, in his academic publications, 'phrases and key words' which are also used by the militante gruppe;

As political scientist holding a PhD, Matthias B. is seen to be intellectually capable to 'author the sophisticated texts of the militante gruppe (mg).' Additionally, 'as employee in a research institute he has access to libraries which he can use inconspicuously in order to do the research necessary to the drafting of texts of the militante gruppe;'

Another accused individual is said to have met with suspects in a conspiratorial manner: 'meetings were regularly arranged without, however, mentioning place, time and content of the meetings; 'furthermore, he is said to have been active in the 'extreme left-wing scene;'

In the case of a third accused individual, an address book was found which included the names and addresses of the other three accused;

Dr. Andrej H., who works as urban sociologist, is claimed to have close contacts with all three individuals;

Dr. Andrej H. is alleged to have been active in the 'resistance mounted by the extreme left-wing scene against the World Economic Summit of 2007 in Heiligendamm;'

It all hangs
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***conspiratorial
behaviour:***
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the accused is
behaving
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**strengthens
the suspicion.**



The fact that he—allegedly intentionally—did not take his mobile phone with him to a meeting is considered as ‘conspiratorial behaviour’—(summary from support group)

‘CONSPIRATORIAL BEHAVIOUR’ is a concept that is particularly dangerous. It’s so vague, vaguer even than government definitions of terrorism, and it’s all encompassing. It includes moving from the cities, building close relations with local communities and using encryption. It’s who you are friends with, your political ideas, your relationships, how you live:

‘The offence of “conspiracy” allows to include at once the entire existence of the people targeted, and everything can therefore become part of the accusation: literature, spoken languages, skills, connections with people from other countries, mobility, lack of cell phones, breaking with one’s plan of career or one’s social background, romance, etc.’ —Benjamin, one of the Tarnac 9

In this sense the attacks against the anarchists in Tarnac and elsewhere are an attack not only against individuals but also against communal, self-determined ways of living and organising. The French police say the group had ‘gone underground’ in Tarnac, although as any small town kid will know, secrets are hard to keep in a village. It’s true the accused had been up to things in Tar-

nac—they had re-opened the local grocery store and collectivised it, organised delivery of food to the elderly and turned empty land into gardens again. The conspiracy of the commune.

Likewise it’s easy to see why the New Zealand government got so heavy-handed in the Ureweras—people from different tribes, different cities, anarchists and anti-militarists, tino rangatiratanga ‘extremists’ allegedly all meeting up together in one of the most isolated, most radical parts of the country. That kind of thing would be dangerous for the government if it happened. And however paranoid one might consider governments to be, their fears of not being able to control the population don’t come from thin air:

‘to govern has never meant anything but to hold back, by a thousand subterfuges, the moment when the crowd will string you up—and every act of government is nothing but another way to keep from losing control over the population.’ —The Coming Insurrection.¹

1. The Coming Insurrection was published anonymously by the Invisible Committee. The French police insist it is co-authored by Julian Coupat, one of the Tarnac 9 who is still prison on terror charges. The text, both beautiful and intensely philosophical, is as the name suggests deeply insurrectionist. It’s hard to pick what scared the police most about this text: perhaps the advocacy of the interruption (by sabotage) of the flows



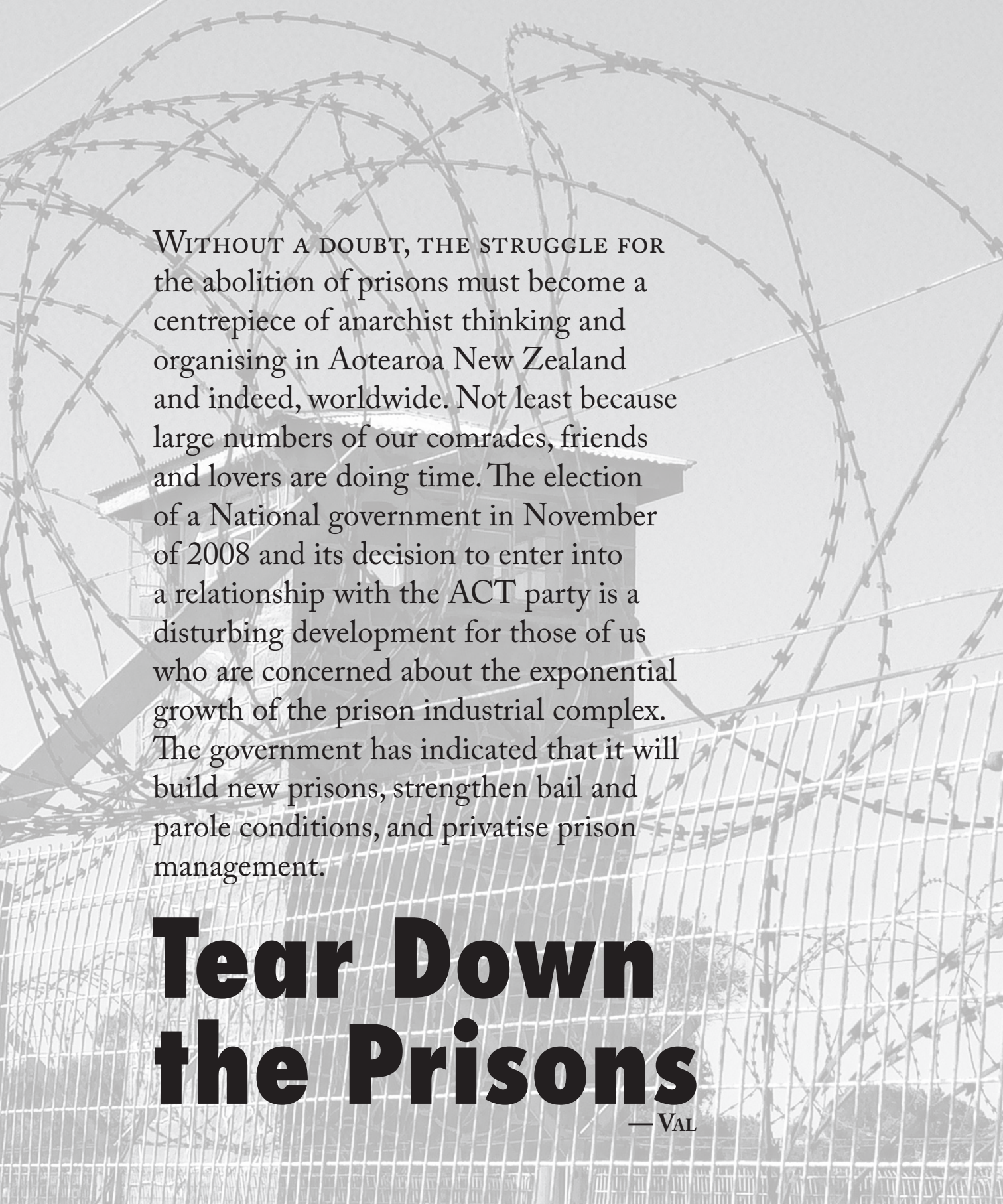
Most of these subterfuges are remarkably old-school, it's only the technology and language used now that reads like science fiction. Conspiracy charges in particular are a well used tactic against political dissidents—as a weapon such charges are second only to terror allegations but easier for the State to get away with. Individual defence strategies aside (pleading innocent in a trial is anyway a kind of non co-operation), it's dangerous to try to fight repression with declarations of innocence and victimisation (and I differentiate this from saying something hurts like hell). Surveillance, police, militarism, government, homophobia, detention centres—all these things need to conspired against. Fighting repression needs to be based on a desire to rupture the systems of oppression we live under so far there is no going back; not based on trying to convince media vultures and communities around us that we have no power, that we are 'innocent.' What does innocent even mean in a social order based on racism, prisons and inequality?

And how did it get to the point where people in Aotearoa attack the secret service spying of political groups and individuals on the basis of 'but we're harmless'? How depressing.

FIND YOURSELVES. Find each other. Our desires and our words are still ours. Got it? ■

and networks of capitalism and power. Perhaps the advocacy of collective self defence, communes, learning, self-organisation and tactics of invisibility—avoiding direct confrontation, staying in the shadows until the last possible moment. An English translation can be found at tarnac9.wordpress.com

FIGHTING
REPRESSION
needs to be
based on a
*desire to
rupture*
systems of
oppression
we live under
*so far there is no
going back;*
not based
on trying
to convince
MEDIA
VULTURES and
communities
around us
that we
have *no*
power,
that we are
'innocent.'



WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE STRUGGLE FOR the abolition of prisons must become a centrepiece of anarchist thinking and organising in Aotearoa New Zealand and indeed, worldwide. Not least because large numbers of our comrades, friends and lovers are doing time. The election of a National government in November of 2008 and its decision to enter into a relationship with the ACT party is a disturbing development for those of us who are concerned about the exponential growth of the prison industrial complex. The government has indicated that it will build new prisons, strengthen bail and parole conditions, and privatise prison management.

Tear Down the Prisons

—VAL



Why should anarchists care about prisons?

IN A SOCIETY BASED ON COERCION, prison is the single greatest weapon in the arsenal of the state. Prison is a means of social control. It serves the dual purpose of controlling the populace who are not in prison with the constant threat of this sanction, and as a means to control those who are in prison through the denial of liberty. For people involved in the struggle for liberation, the constant threat of arrest and imprisonment is a powerful tool that the State uses to limit acts of rebellion. It is the fear of prison that keeps most of us in line. Meanwhile, those who are imprisoned are subject to extreme curtailment of basic freedoms including movement, association and speech while they are simultaneously degraded, isolated and brutalised.

In a deeply racist, patriarchal and classist society such as New Zealand, prison is one of the institutional manifestations of a hierarchy intended to perpetuate White supremacy, the subjugation of women and elite control. Most crime happens because of ‘the tendency of capitalist societies to set up desirables (such as wealth) which are inaccessible to large categories of people [and which] actually creates the conditions in which deviation from the accepted means of obtaining those goals is likely.’²

The destruction of prisons is an integral part of an anarchist vision for a free society.

What is the situation with prisons now in Aotearoa New Zealand?

IN SEPTEMBER 2007, there were 8,372 prisoners³ and approximately 31,800 offenders serving community-based sentences and orders.⁴ That is 197 people for every 100,000 in the country. Aotearoa New Zealand is far ahead of what might be described as ‘comparable countries’ such as England (151), Canada (123) and Australia (130).⁵ The prison population is continuing to grow. The Corrections Department is quick to admit, ‘New Zealand’s use of imprisonment is probably the second highest in the Western world and further growth in our imprisonment rate is expected in the next ten years.’⁶ There are 20 prisons in New Zealand; three are for women.

A major factor fueling the growth in the prison population in the decades 1950–1990 has been the dramatic rise in the imprisonment of Māori. In the 1920s, 4% of the prison population were Māori, rising to 6% in 1930 and 15% by 1940. Between 1950–1990 there was a seven-fold increase in

the number of Māori sent to prison — about four times the comparable non-Māori increase. Although making up just 4% of the total population aged 15 years and over, in 1950 Māori accounted for 18% of sentenced prisoners. Over the period 1950 to the mid-1970s the number of Māori offenders sent to prison grew at an average annual rate of 8.8%.⁷ In 2008, Māori made up 15% of the population, yet 49% of sentenced prisoners were Māori, and 45% of those in community based sentences were Māori.⁸

There are several reasons for the disproportionate representation of Māori in prisons — urbanisation, poverty and the on-going effects of colonisation. Certainly at the heart of it is racism. Officially published research asserts that, once apprehended, Māori offenders fare less well in the judicial process than their Pākehā counterparts,⁹ being more likely to be prosecuted, to be convicted, and to receive more severe sentences.¹⁰ Māori have since the arrival of colonisers in the mid-1800s been cast as the criminal class — first labeled as ‘savages,’ then ‘rebels,’ now as ‘gang members’ and even ‘terrorists.’

The dramatic rise in the overall prison population in Aotearoa New Zealand is not without cause. Crime rates do not rise because there are more ‘born criminals’ about, but because social conditions change.¹¹ As the social safety net is deliberately allowed to wither, the police state flourishes: the direct and inevitable effect of impoverishing and weakening social protection.¹² The neo-liberal economic reforms of the 1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand resulted in a dramatic growth in the gap between rich and poor coupled with massive social upheaval.

Where is the prison state heading?

THE NEW NATIONAL GOVERNMENT has already promised to build a new prison to accommodate

up to 570 inmates resulting from changes to bail and parole laws. The Department of Corrections has advised the government that up to four new prisons will be needed as a result of so-called ‘law and order’ policies.¹³

The government has several measures intended to expand the use of prison labour for private profit. First, prisoners will be required to work while in prison. Those who refuse to work will not be granted parole. Workers at Arohata Women’s Prison near Wellington were being paid on average \$0.30 an hour for up to 20 hours a week of work cleaning, doing laundry and serving food during my brief imprisonment there in 2007. Further to these slave wages, the National government has indicated that it will ‘talk to private companies about opportunities for meaningful work and training for prisoners’¹⁴ which indicates that prisoners may be forced into labour for capitalist enterprises against their will. The National party is planning to amend the Parole Act to ensure prisoners who could work but refuse are not eligible for parole. There are already prisoner work schemes in New Zealand with businesses including Canon copiers. It is not unreasonable to deduce that prisoners will be coerced to work for such companies in order to get out of prison.

Corporate management of prisons is also part of the agenda. The shift to privatisation is the result of the convergence of three trends: the ideological imperatives of the free market; the huge increase in the number of prisoners; and the concomitant increase in imprisonment costs.¹⁵ The National Party points to the experience of the Auckland Central Remand Prison as an example of the positive benefits of private prison management. National has said it will ‘allow competitive tendering for the management of prisons on a case-by-case basis.’¹⁶ There is little empirical evidence to support National’s claim that privately

run prisons are more cost-effective.¹⁷ These ‘public-private partnerships’ present significant new obstacles to transparency and accountability in an already well-cloaked area of government operation.

Resisting prisons in Aotearoa New Zealand

FOLLOWING THE NATIONWIDE State terror raids in October 2007, the anarchist and radical activist community had a very quick schooling in the prison system. One of the immediate responses was the establishment of an Anarchist Black Cross group in Wellington. Their work has focused on prisoner support and public education. While only in its early days, the group has made a good start in taking on the work of prison abolition.

A much older organisation working for liberal prison reform is the Howard League for Penal Reform. The Howard League works to promote open and rational debate on issues of crime, punishment, rehabilitation and alternatives to prison in New Zealand. While not an advocate of prison abolition per se, the Howard League does prepare some useful resources that assist in deconstructing the hysteria about crime and the need for harsh law and order policies.

Prison Fellowship New Zealand is a volunteer-based Christian ministry with a vision to be a national movement of reconciliation and restoration within the Criminal Justice System. Hardly revolutionary in their activities, Prison Fellowship does, however, attempt to educate the public about the needs of prisoners and their families.

Rethinking Crime and Punishment is a strategic initiative to raise the level of public debate about the use of prison and alternative forms of punishment in New Zealand.¹⁸ The Salvation Army and Prison Fellowship New Zealand have joined to lead this project and the spokesperson, Kim Workman, has been a vocal opponent of the recent raft of new prison and sentencing acts.

In mid-2008, a group of Napier residents formed The Really Sensible Sentencing Trust to oppose the tough law and order policies of the Sensible Sentencing Trust, also based in Napier. This liberal group is fronted by Labour MP Russell Fairbrother and is based on the idea that ‘only the worst of the worst criminals should be sent to jail’ and that ‘the rest were victims of a competitive society focused on private gain at the expense of public good, and they should be supported in the community with taxpayer funds that would otherwise go into keeping them locked up.’¹⁹

‘The **anti-capitalist**
movement
and the
earth liberation
movement have, to
some
extent, now
become
the *prison*
abolition
movement.’¹



These groups have done much good work to re-humanise prisoners in the eyes of the population, and to their credit, recognise that there are significant structural problems at the heart of the criminal justice system. However, the view that 'only the worst should be locked up' cements in the minds of most people that the prison system only needs reforms to make it work better and more justly. This is not the case.

Against reform, against all prisons

THERE IS SIGNIFICANT ANARCHIST and anti-authoritarian writing about prisons, anti-prison activism and the need for a revolutionary stance on prisons. While the balance provided by progressive organisations is largely to be welcomed in our current age of draconian legislation and rabid 'law and order' authoritarians, the underlying and root issues on which all prisons are based must be attacked and destroyed. Moreover, the rhetoric of progressive organisations can serve to entrench the flawed foundations on which prisons are based. There is a significant gap between the 'abolitionist' perspective and the 'reformist' tradition. Organisations like the Howard League's view is that there is nothing wrong with prison that a good dose of reform wouldn't cure coupled with a belief that progress is best achieved on the quiet by reasoned arguments. This leaves them unable to mount any effective resistance to the move towards mass imprisonment or to engage with the public.²⁰

Neo-conservatives point to the failure of the progressive models of leniency for offenders as a basis for their punitive stance. The prison population has risen in most Western countries sig-

nificantly despite the introduction of a range of reforms, but this has happened while crime rates have fallen. Thus it is not leniency that has been the failure, and thereby caused the growth of the prisons, but rather the ‘criminalisation’ of vast numbers of people. Traditionally debates about prison’s effectiveness centred on its capacity to reform the individual. In contrast, the New Right view is that prison is of no benefit to the incarcerated individual but that the way to defeat crime is to mass incarcerate. In their view, prison works by being a harsh and punishing place, thus the National Party’s ‘three strikes’ policy which would deny parole to anyone convicted three times of a ‘serious and violent’ offence.

What we must remember when we argue a revolutionary anti-prison position is that it is not nicer prisons we want. Progressive prison reforms under capitalism will do nothing to slow the flood of people into this country’s prisons. Prisons are part of a legal system largely based on private property and a capitalist order. ‘We do not reprove certain behaviour because it is criminal; it is criminal because we reprove it’²¹ — in other words, in our society, we deem ‘criminal’ that which attacks or undermines the current capitalist order.

Radical anti-prison activism is taking many forms around the globe. Prisoner support is a major part of that activity. In Germany, anti-prison activists have been supporting prisoners by holding regular protests outside of the prisons complete with fireworks and loud sound systems through which family and friends can communicate with those inside. Prisoner support networks such as the Earth Liberation Front Prisoner Sup-

port Network²² have been communicating with prisoners about their needs, encouraging people to communicate with prisoners and provide them support.

In 2002 opposition to the building of a new prison at Ngawha, a small Māori community in Northland included picketing and occupying the offices of the Minister of Corrections, national days of action and occupying the land on which the prison was to be built. The prison was ultimately built, but the protests have had a lasting impact upon prison construction projects as communities around the country reject plans for more prisons. ■

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FREE SPACES FOR FREE PEOPLE

—JEN

MATT HERN SHARES WITH us the nuts and bolts that hold together an East Vancouver wonder: The Purple Thistle Youth Arts and Activism Centre.

Back in the year 2000, Matt noticed that a number of his teenage friends were drifting, not really connected to school or other social institutions. So he gathered seven of them (and soon their pals) in his kitchen, and for six months they schemed about starting some kind of youth centre: a place that didn't pander to young people, that didn't try to waste their time, that actively engaged them and was genuinely youth-driven and democratic.

IN HIS WORDS, 'I kept asking, what are you doing when you are doing really well, when you are thriving? They answered, making zines and art, taking pictures, writing, making movies, painting, animating shorts, drawing, building websites, silk-screening, designing crazy gardens, traveling, riding bikes, sculpting, being creative. So I said, let's start a place where you can do that stuff. So we did and then just started inviting their friends, associates and any other kids who were interested — and just let it spin and grow from there.'

The kids who started the Thistle eight years ago are now all in their mid-twenties and off in the world, 'one of the founders is just finishing an art B.A. with an internship at Cooper Union in New York City, another is interning at the Nation in New York City, another has two kids and is an elementary school teacher at the Albany Free School, some are running independent projects, one has her own magazine, a couple are full-on activists. I am totally proud to see how many great Thistle kids are out there.'

These days the Purple Thistle operates in several ways: From 9am-4pm ten young people take part in full-time, paid training programmes. Then from 4-10pm it's open as a resource centre. Many groups, big and small, use the space for meetings, conferences and gatherings or as a work-space, and it is a base for classes and projects of all kinds. Everything is always free. The centre is focused on young people (aged 15-30) because, Matt tells us, 'We feel these are the people who need to be supported in their independence the most. But we encourage participation on all levels from people aged one to one thousand.'

The two daytime training programmes that run at the Purple Thistle are called The Zine Job and DreamSeeds. In the first, participants learn desktop publishing and web design by making zines, magazines and websites; the second is exclusively for young women and is based on a combination of art and community organising. Matt explains, 'Participating in these projects is a paid full-time job that runs in the centre from 9-4 every day for between five or six months, and has multiple components, including employment support, college entry, project start-up help, mentorships, internships and much else.'

CONCEIVED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SCHOOL, a 'de-schooling centre,' the Purple Thistle operates outside of the school calendar. The centre is kept open as much as the collective wants and is able to. In addition, any collective member is welcome to keep the space open outside regular public hours any time they like — either by

opening the place, holding a specific event, having a few folks in, or just going in during off hours, in the middle of the night or whenever, to do their own thing. Essentially it is always open in some fashion.

Asked whether he would describe the Purple Thistle as a consciously anarchist project, Matt answers, 'Yup. I always describe it as such — but I doubt anything like a majority of the kids would think of it like that. There are always waves of kids who use the centre and the balance shifts over time — sometimes there's lots of crust, sometimes lots of geeky sincere activists, other times arty quasi-hipsters. There are something like 150 kids who use the place at any given time and there is always a real mixture of course, but probably not even half would ever call themselves anarchists. That said, I feel very confident in describing it as anarchist project in organizational structure, in its horizontalism, in its influences and inspirations. But I'm also not super-attached to the label.'

All the day-to-day organization and staffing of the centre is done by the youth collective, a group of 12-15 volunteer youth staff, each of whom has a key and keeps the space open for one three hour shift per week.

The collective meets every Monday at 8pm, and together they make all the decisions regarding the space, build the schedule, create projects and listen to what one another is up to. The Monday meetings are open to all, and everyone who comes participates as an equal. Decisions are made by consensus and everything is open for discussion.

'If anyone is interested in being part of the collective, they are encouraged to just hang around, get to know everyone, come to meetings, and after a while, once they understand the place and how they can contribute, they are welcome to put themselves on the list for the next available staff position.'

Adds Matt, 'Further, each youth staff person, often in consultation with me, develops one spe-

cific area of programming, usually in collaboration with a local arts organisation or existing community project. This programming — perhaps an on-going class, workshop series, program or project — typically involves seven to ten other youth participants. That way we build our programming based on the needs and interests of participants — do outreach organically, i.e. new folks come in via projects or classes they are into participating in, and the programming is shared.'

WITH THE PURPLE THISTLE well-established and the collective taking care of day-to-day running of the space, Matt's role is now minimal. 'I mentor the youth collective, do the fundraising, and do the meta-organizing: taking care of city permits, making sure the rent and heat is paid. The day-to-day running of the place is largely up to the collective and I work with them as little or as much as makes sense. The less they need me the better, but I am always happy to assist, be part of projects, contribute.' Somehow Matt also finds time to be an author, teacher and public speaker, and is the founder of the Car-Free Commercial Drive Festival and Car-Free Vancouver Day.

The Purple Thistle website mentions that mistakes are encouraged, but racism, sexism, classism, homo/transphobia, ableism, and all other forms of aggression will be challenged. When asked about how this works, Matt ventures, 'Of course we want the place to be unapologetically and unambiguously friendly and welcoming to all kinds of people, queer, racialised, whatever, but we frankly do not have any policies per se on this — really we don't have any policies and almost no bureaucracy. What we do have is one basic rule: No Assholism. We mean just that, don't be intimidating or racist or homophobic. Clean up after yourselves, be chill, share the resources ... it's all obvious. And we rarely — if really ever — have any issues around this stuff. There is no adult authority ever in place, there is no polic-



ing that needs to go on — it's just not a place for assholeism.'

The Purple Thistle website mentions that collective members sacrificed financial independence from the government in order to have the centre exist. Expanding on this, Matt says, 'Of course no one has financial independence unless they are somehow ridiculously personally rich, we all have to make certain sacrifices and compromises. The ones we have chosen to make are that we receive some government (both federal and municipal) and some private foundation grants — not tons, we try to operate as cheaply as possible — and we try to make the fewest compromises possible, and not sell our soul (for example the collective decided some time ago not to accept Olympic-related funding). We try to pitch ourselves straight up — frankly the centre is a great place and doesn't re-

ally have to resort to bullshit much to get funded. We don't claim we are educating people, we don't claim we are fixing 'at-risk' youth, we don't pretend we are a school or anything. Mostly I just tell 'em the truth.'

The centre was initially funded with the pocket money of those involved, 'Me and the seven kids put \$20 a month each into a jar. Then we got a small grant.' Nowadays, a lot of time and energy goes into funding applications, but as Matt tells us, 'I have gotten much better at it over the years and don't waste time with shit we ain't going to get.'

'The zoning restrictions in Vancouver are kind of a pain in the ass, so really we took the first place in the neighbourhood that I thought we could get permitted. After four years we were evicted from that spot — which was fair — we



were way too big, too many kids hanging around, too much mess, too much noise — and since have moved into a perfect place. It's a little off the main drag, in a big warehouse space in a building that is full of artists — 2400 square feet that we have really built and transformed into our own over the past four years.

"The building's awesome and is a huge old space full of artist studios. Our facility (we rent it — two grand a month) is not massive but big enough with a library room, a meeting/living room area, bike fixing place with tools, huge darkroom, big ol' computer lab, awesome animation studio, silk-screening room, kitchen, art/painting area, sewing machines and really a huge amount of supplies and equipment — and its all free.

'We are on Coast Salish lands,¹ but we don't have a particular articulated strategy regarding that reality, except to stay thinking about it, stay cognizant, to constantly listen, invite, collaborate. There are a number of native crews that use the space, native folks on staff and we run this exchange program with an isolated Dené² settlement in the north. We just keep thinking about what decolonisation might mean and looking for ways to act on that.'

1. Coast Salish refers to a subgroup of the First Nations cultures who speak one of the Coast Salish languages. Coast Salish lands refers to a region divided up by colonial governments into British Columbia in Canada, and the states of Washington and Oregon in the U.S.A.
 2. The Dené are a First Nations group who live in the northern boreal and Arctic regions of Canada.

THE PURPLE THISTLE IS STRONGLY CONNECTED to East Vancouver in all kinds of ways, 'I've lived in the neighbourhood for 18 years now so have a lot of connections and relationships — but maybe more so because many of the kids are very active and have all kinds of relationships with all kinds of projects. Also we've been around for eight years now so most folks know us and we try to collaborate and work with other groups whenever possible.'

But the Purple Thistle's tentacles reach further than just East Vancouver. Since 1992 Matt has run organised adventures called 'Teen Trips' to places as far afield as Death Valley in the southwestern United States. The idea has been to gather 20–25 kids, a few small children and three adults and get out on the road for a month or more. The teens have to do all their own shopping, cooking, tenting and cleaning. The adults are there to drive, advise, supervise and surmise, but really the trips are long, traveling explorations into self-reliance, both individual and collaborative.

As an outgrowth of a decade worth of trips, in 2002 Matt was involved in starting a youth exchange program between East Vancouver and Radeli Ko (Fort Good Hope) in the Northwest Territories, Canada. The exchanges are pretty standard in some ways: two weeks in each community, youth partnered up and staying in each other's houses, participating in various cultural and community events, etc. In many other ways however, this is a different kind of relationship, in part because it is tough to imagine two communities within Canada being more different: one a diverse urban neighbourhood (Commercial Drive), the other an isolated Dené community of 600 people on the Arctic Circle, 1200 kilometres northwest of Yellowknife,³ right on the Mackenzie River.

The exchanges are also organised with the explicit goal of getting native and non-native kids together. In Matt's words, 'We have long noticed, especially in a diverse neighbourhood like ours, that kids are largely tolerant of one another in an era where they are bombarded with anti-racist messages. That tolerance is about as far as it tends to go though, and native kids especially tend to live in different worlds from non-native youth.'

'The central goal of this project is to move past simple tolerance and towards comprehension of each other's home lives and communities. We've had some great times so far and are looking forward to continuing to build the relationship between communities.'

Adds Matt, 'Kids come to these trips via the Purple Thistle, or vice versa — often kids will take part in one of the trips and then stay on and become involved in other parts of the centre.'

So what will the future hold? When asked whether the collective has any hopes or dreams Matt reassures us, 'Yeah of course — not to get bigger or anything: just keep on having a good time together, keep on meeting great kids, keep on being a useful space.'

So if upon reading this you're daydreaming about setting up something similar where you live, Matt has lots of advice, 'Just call or write me. I'm really easy to find. Mostly though just trust yourself and don't wait. Just get it on.'

For more info or to contact Matt for advice check out: www.purplethistle.ca & www.mightymatth-ern.com ■

km south of the Arctic Circle. Yellowknife and its surrounding water bodies were named after the local Yellowknives Dené First Nation.

3. Yellowknife is the capital of the Northwest Territories (NWT), Canada. It is located approximately 400



The War that Never Ended

— RJ

“If war is the absence of peace, then war has never ended in Taranaki, because that essential prerequisite for peace among peoples, that each should be able to live with dignity on their own lands, is still absent and the protest over land rights continues to be made.”¹

THIS IS THE WAITANGI TRIBUNAL WRITING in ‘The Taranaki Report’ in 1996, a report written after twelve tribunal hearings across Taranaki between 1990–95. It’s a damning report, illustrating the ‘muru’ — “plunder or confiscation of property as punishment for alleged offences” and the ‘raupatu’ — “the conquest or subjugation of the people by government control.”²

The 17th March 2010 marks the 150th anniversary of the start of said war. The war is often described as three wars: the first war starting at Waitara when 500 colonial troops started shelling Wiremu Kingi Te Rangitake’s Te Kohia Pa;³ the second war in 1863;⁴ and finally ‘Tiitokowaru’s war’ in southern Taranaki.

However, the shots fired at Waitara in 1860, the ‘New Zealand Settlement Act 1863,’ the battles in southern Taranaki at Te Ngutu-o-te-manu, the invasion of Parihaka in 1881 and the confiscation of land, destruction of resources and the rape and the killing have

left Taranaki iwi devastated. The war rages on as wherever you look you find injustice.

This article looks at the war in southern Taranaki in 1868/9 and at a man with the name of Tiitokowaru. Here is a letter written to the government in 1868, shortly before the fighting started:

He kupu mo koutou, kati te haere i ngaa rori me whakamutu rawa te haere i ngaa rori e anga atu ana ki Mangamanga, kei takoto koutou ki ngaa rori hei kai ma ngaa manu o te rangi, ma ngaa kirehe o te parae, maku ranei, no te mea kua kai ahau i te Paakehaa, ano he kau e tunua ana ki te Pata, kai kau ana nga wahine, me ngaa tamarihi. Kua timata taku kai i te Tangata, kua hamama tonu toku korokoro ki te kai i te Tangata.

E kore ahau e mate, kaore ahau e mate. Ka mate ano te mate, ka ora ano ahau.

Na Tiitoko. (Hune 25, 1868)⁵

(A word for you. Cease travelling on the roads; stop forever the going on the roads which lead to Mangamanga [Waihi], lest you be left on the roads as food for the birds of the air and for the beasts of the field, or for me, because I have eaten the European, as beef, he was cooked in a pot; the women and the children partook of the food. I have begun to eat human flesh, and my throat is constantly open for the flesh of man. I shall not die; I shall not die. When death itself is dead I shall be alive. From Titoko (25th June 1868))⁶

Tiitokowaru — guerilla fighter extraordinaire

Noo te 5 o ngaa raa o Whiringa-a-Rangi, ka whakaeke atu ngaa hooia Paakehaa ki runga a

Parihaka. After months of direct action against the confiscation of land by the people of Parihaka, the colonial state invaded the country's biggest Maaori settlement of that time on 5th November 1881 with 2000 volunteers and members of the Armed Constabulary. The well-known leaders Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kaakahi were among the hundreds of arrestees. So was Tiitokowaru of Ngaruahine.

While aligning himself with Te Whiti and Tohu's teaching of non-violence for most of his life, Tiitokowaru fought the crown in an armed struggle in 1868/9 in southern Taranaki. And he did so very successfully.

The decision to take up arms against the rau-patu (confiscation) was made in June 1868 and several battles followed between colonial forces and Tiitokowaru and his warriors. In these battles, the Maaori resistance was usually outnumbered by 5:1 or even higher. Still, they managed to achieve decisive victories.

Guerilla Warfare in Taranaki

"Mobile strike force," "hit and run tactics," "using the element of surprise," "cut[ing] off the urban centres' sources of supplies and energy," "setting ambushes for the state security forces" — that sounds just like Tiitokowaru's fighting community. These descriptions of rural guerilla warfare are given in a text titled 'Revolutionary Armed Struggle' and written in the 1970s by an anonymous soldier of the Black Liberation Army.⁷ Just as Te Kooti used guerilla tactics in the Bay of Plenty to fight colonial troops, Tiitokowaru fought similar battles in Taranaki.

The first major battle took place at Turuturu Mokai on 12th July 1868.⁸ Tiitokowaru's warriors attacked a colonial redoubt not far from Hawera held by around 25 soldiers and only 3 miles from

1. The Taranaki Report, p. 2

2. Ibid. p. ii

3. Ibid. p. 85

4. Ibid. p. 85

5. Broughton, p. 110

6. Belich, p. 57

7. Belich, p. 81-97 and Broughton, p. 111-113

8. Broughton, p. 112

Camp Waihi, home to hundreds of colonial troops. The attack took place on a night with strong winds to muffle the gunfire. The aim was not to enter the redoubt, but to maximise Paakehaa casualties. A group of Tiitokowaru's snipers were positioned around 150 yards away on higher grounds. With a cry of "Patua! Kainga!" the warriors attacked.⁹ The re-enforcements from Camp Waihi took hours to arrive due to poor organisation and by the time they did get to Turuturu Mokai, the houses surrounding the redoubt were on fire, 16 Paakehaa dead and the Maaori warriors had already disappeared. With only six casualties on his side, it was a clear victory for Tiitokowaru.

Te Ngutu-o-te-manu — the beak of the bird

With the war well under way, the colonial troops were eager for revenge. Their first attempt of reaching Tiitokowaru's headquarters in the bush at Te Ngutu-o-te-manu failed miserably with the soldiers getting lost and ending up miles away from the paa. However, on 21st August 1868, the colonialists marched to Te Ngutu and surprised Tiitoko after a rainy night. Most of the warriors were away and the ambush which was set up just below the paa, Te Maru o Te Whenua, was not occupied by Tiitokowaru's soldiers that night. The 300 troops were met by only around 20 Maaori soldiers, who fled into the forest when the attack started. The paa was taken. However, the colonial troops did not stay long as the warriors were hurrying back to the paa after hearing the gun shots. The troops left quickly again to their safe camp at Waihi.

The Paakehaa 'victory' wasn't really won and a further attempt was made two weeks later. Again, the colonials were struggling to locate the paa and only by accident did the kuupapa (Maaori who fought on the side of the Crown) scouts come across a hospital clearing to the north of Te Ngutu-o-te-manu. In their attempt to approach the paa, they were suddenly attacked from all sides: from the trees and hidden firing positions in the bush. "E 50-60 ngaa Paakehaa i matemate, kotahi anake te Maaori."¹⁰ (Between 50 and 60 Paakehaa died, and only one Maaori.) Several colonial leaders were killed, including Major Von Tempsky.

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With a cry of
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the warriors attacked.

9. Broughton, p. 122

10. Broughton, p. 122

Moturoa

The colonial troops retreated and hid in their camps defending Patea, Hawera and Whanganui. Tiitokowaru moved south towards Whanganui unchallenged and set up a new paa at Moturoa/Ookootuku. The colonialists decided to attack on 7th November 1868 and were again defeated suffering similar losses like in the second battle at Te Ngutu-o-te-manu. Again, hidden firing positions in the bush stopped kuupapa leader Kepa and his soldiers. Well-positioned palisades stopped the frontal assault by other columns. Instead, Tiitokowaru launched a counter-attack and encircled the colonial troops. Like in previous battles, the warriors chased the troops out of their rohe (area) and all the way to the bush line down towards the sea, keeping a safe distance but still launching attacks against the retreating enemy.

“I te hingahinga o te Paakehaa i Ookootuku, kaatahi ka haere mai te nui o Taranaki ki te aawhina i a Tiitokowaru. I tae mai a Taranaki, a Te Aati Awa, a Ngaati Maru, a Ngaati Ruanui, a Ngaa Rauru aa, piki ake ana te tokopae o aana toa ki te 400.”¹¹

(After the Paakehaa defeat at Ookootuku, many Taranaki tribes came to help Tiitokowaru. Taranaki, Te Aati Awa, Ngaati Maru, Ngaati Ruanui and Ngaa Rauru all arrived and the number of warriors increased to 400.)

Taurangaika — kua mutu te pakanga...

Taurangaika was Tiitokowaru's last fortified village, just 15kms from Whanganui. His warriors came within a stone throw of this major city, raiding farms in broad daylight. The paa was probably the best fortified Maaori village to date. It was in a diamond shape and had a tall tower in one corner.

1077 colonial troops got ready to attack Taurangaika in early February 1869 only to find it abandoned. A soldier commented later that “[i]t is more than doubtful if we should have taken it by storm.”¹² But Tiitokowaru's warriors had left the night before. They were chased northwards but never caught. However, the armed struggle was over and the land was lost.

Different interpretations of Tiitokowaru's sudden disappearance from Taurangaika have surfaced. Historian James Belich follows Kimble Bent — a Paakehaa who fought on Tiitokowaru's side — who commented that Tiitokowaru lost his mana because he “was detected in a liaison with another man's wife. [...] A council of the people was held to discuss the cause celebre, and many an angry speech was made.” It was decided, so said Bent, that the paa be abandoned because “their tohunga, their spiritual head and their war-leader, had lost his mana-tapu.”¹³ However, many Taranaki Maaori say this account is incorrect. They say Taurangaika was left because everybody was exhausted after living a quasi nomadic life for almost two years. It wasn't so much the war that people were sick of, but the constant moving around as well as general quarrels within the group.

“Kaaore rawa a Tiitokowaru i matakū ki te tangata: he tangata taikaha ia, he tangata maaro, he tangata kaaore e tukuna e ia kia takahia toona mana. [...] Ko taa Tiitokowaru mahi he whakamaru i toona iwi. Eehara naana te pakanga aa, eehara kau naa te Maaori ngaa pakanga moo te whenua naa te Paakehaa kee.”¹⁴

(Tiitokowaru was not afraid of people: he was a persistent man, a strong man and his mana was not trampled upon. [...] Tiitokowaru's work

12. Belich, p. 244

13. Broughton, p. 233

14. Belich, p. 287

was to defend his tribe. The war was not his, and the wars for the land were not of Maaori making either, they were started by the Pakeha instead.)

A community in resistance

Tiitokowaru and his warriors were lacking numbers and resources (weapons, ammunition, horses etc.) but were winning all other aspects of the war: they had superior knowledge of the area, better bush skills, were tactically fighting on a higher level than the colonial troops, were fighting for their land and were resisting as a whole community.

Between June 1868 and February 1869, their community controlled a huge area of land and stopped the confiscation using violent tactics. While the most of the land was taken in the end, the fighting spirit of Tiitokowaru survives until today.

In his words: "Do you consider the Europeans a noble race? Do you think my people will run away? Have the Europeans forgotten Te-Ngutu-o-te-Manu and Moturoa? This is your day but I have a day to come hereafter." ■

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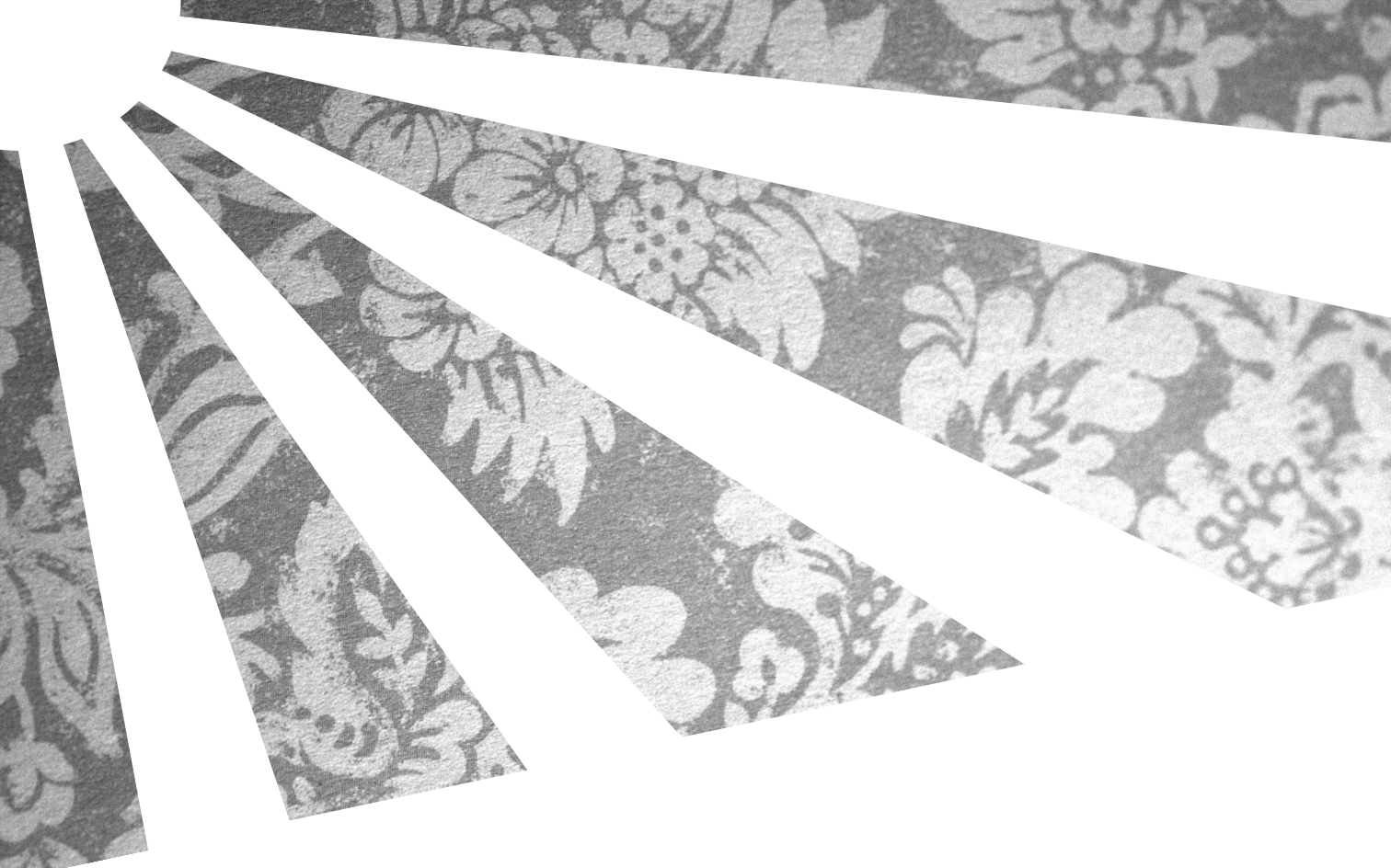
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PLAN OF
TAURANGAIKA PA
WEST COAST

abandoned by TITOKOWARU

A decorative graphic in the top left corner consisting of several overlapping triangles. Each triangle is filled with a different grayscale floral or leaf pattern. The triangles are arranged in a fan-like shape, pointing towards the top right.

'cause i know the biggest crime
is to just throw up your hands
say this has nothing to do with me
i just want to live as comfortably as i can
you got to look outside your eyes
you got to think outside your brain
you got to walk outside your life
to where the neighborhood changes
— Ani Di Franco

Moving Together

— HANA PLANT

ONE OF THE MOST COMPELLING things about anarchism is that it acknowledges the need to live in community of some kind. Despite capitalist propaganda that endorses the illusion of individualism, to exist on this earth together means we are unavoidably interdependent. Balancing freedom with solidarity is the anarchist way of celebrating this fact. In order to really change this world we know we need to work together — we need a revolutionary movement. I believe we can do this by creating diverse communities that associate with an ethic of mutual aid, voluntary co-operation and solidarity.

Over the last few years I have shifted my attention away from activist subculture and immersed myself in the world of Everyday. Disillusioned with popular modes of resistance — protests, propaganda, and media stunts, I began to feel as if these were more habits than tactics. Increasingly unable to communicate outside of an activist context, I realised I was putting a disproportionate amount of energy into my social group, and that this was taking me further and further away from my aim. Lately I have been excited to read more discussion around workplace and community organisation. In this article I want to elaborate on the latter — some of the things that get in our way as well as some of the awesome possibilities.

Living in White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy ensures that creating communities of resistance is never easy. Even as most politicised people would prefer to work in diverse contexts, all too often our radical communities become social groups where middle-class Pakeha hold the power. As anarchists, we are often acutely aware of the politics surrounding gender, colonisation, race and class. Afraid to oppress, afraid of being

rejected, our knowledge does not necessarily show us a way of relating that is not dominating. While we should critically interrogate our intentions and interactions with oppressed groups and individuals (both within and beyond anarchist circles) this should not stop us finding places of common ground, of mutuality. We need to accept that this takes time — time to communicate across difference, time to withstand power struggles, time to get past individualism. We think, *Bugger this — I would get more done working with a bunch of people like me.* Yet getting things done is only half of it; working with difference we create solidarity where there was division — a worthy cause if ever there was one.

Community activism that is specifically anarchist calls us to find ways of connecting with other people that defy the normalised leader/follower, helper/helped paradigm our society sets up. Power-over relationships are unwittingly evoked when we connect with the public from a place of ‘outreach,’ social work or propaganda. This is especially so when the people we want to ‘reach’ are from an oppressed group. Refusing to play along with these scripts, we are free to concentrate on ‘power-with’ relations; finding ways to relate that empower everyone to create and imagine what emerging radical culture and struggle looks like. Part of this process entails a willingness to be confronted, to hear language which is not our own, to not understand, to have to ask. Engaging radically with other people we find our own ideas about political struggle transformed, paving the way to communities where equality is a reality.

There are heaps of possibilities for community activism — many as yet unimagined. Much valuable work could be done to research what’s

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already going on, as well as to envisage new contexts where political and practical relationships can be nurtured. The important thing is that we find ways to ‘walk outside our neighbourhood’ without compromising a radical agenda.

Participating in activities like food co-ops, play centres and community gardens is a way to broaden community while getting our own needs met. These groups are already based (at least somewhat) on mutual aid. Although they may be hierarchical and reformist, we can still practice our anarchist ethics in an oppositional manner. Working side-by-side and sharing resources to grow our own food and look after children are subversive acts in this individualistic culture; they deserve to be celebrated.

By working locally, we reap concrete benefits for our energy and care, while at the same time forming a larger network of people who have the skills to resist. Community groups set up to protect common goods such as public space and free water are an example of this. If we draw parallels between local happenings and the global situation, we can create movement that is both practical and politicised.

Our own workplace offers the opportunity to work alongside folks with whom we may have little else in common. Horizontal violence, collusion with bosses and a climate of fear are realities in many workplaces. In this environment any kind of radical discussion is difficult, let alone collective action. However, even if there is no union, we can help transform workplace culture into a space of resistance by bringing up employment issues, resisting the temptation to compete, and showing solidarity wherever possible.

I am interested in community activism because it nurtures the building blocks of revolution — solidarity, mutual aid and direct action. I am also into the satisfaction of having caring politicised relationships that defy the segregation and individualism of late industrial capitalism. More than ever we must struggle to maintain and create community. There is no short cut — a people’s movement for social change will not begin with an individual, clique or vanguard, no matter how radical.

With our astute ethics, analysis of power and ability to cooperate equitably, we have heaps to offer the world and those around us. The truth at the heart of anarchism is that we as human beings have the capacity to interact in ways that affirm interconnectedness and respect individuality. This is our birthright, and we can choose to practice it, anytime, anywhere. ■



The process is the punishment

Operation 8 two years on — VAL

IT HAS BEEN JUST OVER TWO YEARS SINCE THE police arrested me at 5:45am on Monday, October 15th in my Trades Hall office in Wellington on suspicion of participation in a terrorist group. I spent one month in prison and was then released because there wasn't any evidence. I currently face three charges of unlawful possession of weapons in relation to that arrest. Along with 17 other people, police allege we attended 'military-style' training camps in Te Urewera.



IT HAS BEEN A VERY LONG and difficult two years, and a trial is still two years off. It has become clear to me that regardless of whether this ultimately goes to trial in 2011, the police and crown will have meted out punishments in the pre-trial processes far greater than anything we are likely to receive following an actual conviction for these charges. In so many courts in New Zealand, particularly in the lower courts where most ‘activist charges’ would be heard, this is the case. A seminal 1970s sociology text *The process is the punishment* makes the argument that, ‘the process is the punishment — by the large array of costs that lower-court defendants must bear in order to contest the charges against them, including the costs of securing counsel or the opportunity cost (if any) of not using an attorney, the loss of work time associated with pretrial detention (the length of which will depend on bail levels and ability to make bail), and the cost increases caused by continuances (which require more court appearances, which in turn increase lost work time, stress, and attorneys’ fees)... the confusion and difficulty involved in trying to find an attorney while in jail, especially when one does not know any attorneys personally — and the non-pecuniary costs of pretrial experiences, expenses paid in the currencies of stress, conflict, and confusion.’¹ This essay is a catalogue of some of the punishments that I have already received.

Prison trauma

The month that I spent in prison was deeply traumatising for me. There is not a day that goes by now that I do not think about going to prison. I had been in the police cells before, but that was nothing like the dehumanising, belittling and degrading experience of going to prison. I do not think my experience in that respect was in any way unique. Prison is set up to be those things. Anyone who imagines that prison is about rehabilitation or redemption or anything good simply has no idea what prison is actually like.

1. Jennifer Earl. 2008. ‘Review Essay: The Process Is the Punishment: Thirty Years Later’ (A review of Feeley, Malcolm M. 1992 [1979]. *The Process Is the Punishment: Handling Cases in a Lower Criminal Court*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation) in *Law and Social Inquiry*, Summer, 2008. 33 *Law & Soc. Inquiry* 737. American Bar Association

The Arohata prison is an older prison: the remand wing has individual cells with slots in the door through which you receive your food. My 'co-ey' (co-accused) and I were in the same wing and I sought her out each day for a hug in the morning. I felt I needed the human contact. In prison, we were never told what was going on. For example, one day two guards just showed up and told me to pack my stuff up. I didn't know where I was going or if my co-ey was going with me. I wasn't given the chance to call my lawyer or talk to any of my family or friends. We soon found ourselves in a prison transport van inside little cages: we were shuttled off to Auckland to a new prison there. There were days when I was searched up to seven times, including strip searches where you are required to squat down to ensure you don't have anything hidden in your vagina or anus.

In the third week, I can remember sitting in the common area on a mat looking out the window and just crying. I didn't know if I would be spending the next 14 years there.

Conditions of bail

Once we did get out on 9 November 2007 the judge placed very restrictive bail conditions on us. These conditions included curfews, reporting to the police, restrictions on where we could go, surrendering of our passports and the one that was most difficult for me — non-association with all of my co-accused. The very people I needed most for support, for understanding and comprehending what had happened to us were off-limits to me. It was so strange to go from seeing my co-ey everyday in prison to then not being able to see her at all. Non-association orders in New Zealand have no legal definition so we never knew if being in a crowd of 5, 15, 50 or 500 people constituted 'associating.' We were very careful, and ultimately many of our friends ended up 'policing' us so that we were not in the same spaces. This they did be-

cause they were scared for us, for our tenuous freedom. It hurt so much.

The other conditions of bail were exhausting and frustrating. Regular reporting was a significant financial hardship for many of my co-eyes who had to travel long distances to the police station two or three times a week. Limits on where we could go had little relationship with the charges against us. They did serve as very effective punishment. The bail conditions were slowly relaxed by various judges, but only after a significant fight — not the least with our lawyers to even get them to argue these conditions in court.

Court appearances

In the past two years, I have traveled to Auckland from Wellington (about 650km) more than 15 times. In September 2008, there was a month-long preliminary hearing where the police paraded all their star witnesses for the judge to decide if charges against us could proceed to a trial. On the first day of that hearing, I looked around at the make-up of the court staff, lawyers and defendants. I couldn't help but feel that but for our modern clothing, nothing much had changed since the day when colonial judges in wigs sat in judgment upon rebellious Māori. There have been innumerable 'call-overs,' bail hearings, and weeks' long pre-trial applications. As a defendant in the case, I feel utterly irrelevant to these proceedings. I am not asked any questions, nor am I able to ask any. My lawyer frequently forgets to inform me of upcoming dates or send me the details of various stages of the process. I frequently feel that some of the lawyers do things in a way that is convenient for them, not in the interest of the defendants or in the interest of 'justice.' I am totally disempowered.

Poverty

I am on the dole now. I have two masters degrees and some skills and work experience. Paid work,

however, is just about out of the question now. I had a job interview last year at the local university. I was excited about the job, and was told that I was one of only three people they decided to interview. At the conclusion of the interview, however, one of the panel asked me what was the likelihood of me being convicted and going to prison. I was a bit caught off guard by the question; I said I wasn't entirely sure. I didn't get the job.

It's also hard to tell your boss that you need a week off to go to court, or may need more than that.

Aside from my job prospects, the legal services agency has placed a lien on my house for all of the legal fees incurred in the case. By the time this is all over, it will no longer be mine; it will belong to the State. I will never be able to repay the literally hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on legal representation.

Of course, the legal fees don't cover any of our own expenses in the case. It is not without some irony that when I go to court in Auckland, I eat dumpstered food and stay at a squatted house, while my lawyer charges me for a high-priced hotel and café food three times a day.

Exposure to scum police

In the time that we have been going through the court process, I have been intimately familiar with some of the anti-terror police in the case. We are subjected to their presence at every court hearing. These men who have caused so much pain, who ordered the armed invasion of Rūātoki, who locked children in sheds with no food, who put a gun to the head of a 12 year-old girl and made her kneel outside her house for five hours are in our lives as continual tormentors. I always think it is

strange that they don't have something else to do with their time other than sit in court all day.

Local Wellington police know me by name. They say hello or wave when I am out and about. Perhaps they think this is funny or endearing. It is not, these people were my captors and their actions amount to intimidation.

A community implosion

Prior to the raids and arrests, the anarchist community in Wellington was experiencing some difficulty. We were struggling to deal with abusive behaviour in our community, we were struggling to live up to our ideals, and we were struggling with the perennial question of 'what is to be done' after years of traditional left-style organising.

While the arrests did momentarily provide unity of purpose and bring in many new people, it was short-lived. In the aftermath of the raids, I struggled to come to terms with what I had become a part of; I made many mistakes along the way including speaking for other people, disempowering people, not behaving collectively, and failing to educate myself about basic ideas and protocols. People in our community struggled to survive, to feel valued in what they were doing and to be safe.

The raids were not the cause of the problems within the community, but were certainly a profound contributor to the implosion of the community. They made us aware and they made us afraid. We saw our names, phone numbers and addresses on search warrants. We knew the surveillance continued long after the arrests. We saw and felt the raw brutality of the state.

On the defensive

The on-going legal battle takes up lots of time and lots of energy. I have spent literally hundreds of hours preparing documents and doing research for my lawyer. Our solidarity crew spent months cataloguing each of the 30,000 pages of disclosure into a spreadsheet. All of this kind of work takes us away from organising and educating on the streets and in our communities. Legal cases are by their very nature defensive, and mean that at best, a victory in the courtroom only puts us back in the place we were before all this happened. More likely, without any forward momentum in our community, with all our energy focused on reactive strategy, we have little time to struggle, we stagnate and our energy gets diverted elsewhere.

I could tell you all of the good things that have come as a result of Operation 8. The list is pretty short. I have met some wonderful people, I have learned a few things and we have done some awesome organising. By the time a trial happens, four years after my arrest, my life, my community and the world will be vastly different than it was on that fateful Monday in October 2007. My life has been changed forever, and not for the better. I struggle now to stop the grinding away of my soul and passion in this never-ending battle against bureaucratic processes that cloak punishment and masquerade as justice. ■





Commemorating the Tiananmen Square Massacre

‘Unless we overthrow this inhumane government, our country will have no hope’ — Cai Ling, student organiser

TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED since the Chinese communist state’s massacre of activists at Tiananmen Square in 1989. Twenty years ago, students and workers involved in the June 4th Movement fought against the authoritarianism, patriarchy, corruption and bureaucracy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This movement emerged from a context of economic reform that caused high inflation and declining living standards. Within this movement, there were many inspiring acts of dissent and solidarity, and of worker and student co-operation and mutual aid. There was a momentary rupture in history where the state was under threat, its power undermined through student and worker resistance. The city of Beijing was temporarily taken over by the people and became an autonomous zone. It was a significant threat



to the power of the bureaucrats in the CCP, who then ordered the army to massacre students at Tiananmen Square. The horrific violence of the state should never be forgotten or forgiven.

I will first look at some of the conditions in China based on my relatives' experiences and describe an oral history¹ of this event from the perspective of an ex-Beijing student who now resides in Aotearoa called Jiefang.² Although it is hard to completely comprehend these events without being there and being part of the cultural milieu, much can be learned from people who were there at the grassroots. I also want to go beyond description and look at how and why students employed this concept of democracy; how they were represented in the West and reflect on the strategies both authoritarian communist states and capitalist

liberal democracies use to suppress and limit dissent by using each other to assert their legitimacy.

Some background

For many peasants and workers the communist revolution brought hope of freedom and equality. The ideals of Marx, Engels, Mao and Lenin were the basis for a radical restructuring of urban and rural society in China. My maternal grandfather, who joined the Communist Party at age 30, just after migrating to the city from his village, believed the politics of communism would be beneficial for peasants like him and my grandmother. While the revolution provided material benefits to the working class and the peasantry (initially) — with relatively equal distribution of necessities such as food and clothing — this form of authoritarian communism made many people into worshippers of Mao. The regime created a personality cult around Mao, making it a crime to question his words. Neighbours would report his critics, who would then be arrested. An analogy

1. It is fairly easy to access Western and Chinese histories of the event written from an 'objective' historical approach, but I think that can easily lose the subjective human elements of people's actual experience.

2. Pseudonym

my mother always likes to make is that Mao to most Chinese people during his reign was what God is to Christians — an omnipotent and omnipresent being, who guides the people to salvation. A colleague of hers was imprisoned for 8 years for saying one of the Communist politicians ‘他长得 不像好人’ (didn’t look like a good guy). My paternal grandfather was also imprisoned for three months for being an intellectual. Intellectuals or people with education were considered dangerous and threatening to the communist regime: the Party needed total control over thought and ideology to govern well.

With this all-powerful state in place, there was obviously little scope for democratising power. Since the establishment of the CCP government in 1949, there have been major turbulent periods caused by Mao’s policies such as the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. After Mao’s death, government policies began to change. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping and other pragmatists in the CCP started making economic reforms. This marked 改革开放, the ‘opening up’ of the Chinese economy, which allowed foreign investment and greater integration with global capitalism. However, after decades of anti-capitalism, this had to be presented to Chinese people as part of the socialist program, so Deng termed this change ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics.’ It was a program for modernisation and capital investment to expand the Chinese economy. Consequently, the gap between the rich and poor had greatly widened in China.

The June 4th Movement

After Mao’s death there were several movements for democratic reform, but the most significant and well-known one is what is now called the June 4th Movement. It refers to the student movement³

that fought for democratic reforms in 1989. It emerged from a context of economic reform, high inflation, and corruption and profiteering by state officials. Many ordinary students were swept up in this wave of dissent. A family friend, Jiefang, was one of those students and from here on, the description of the June 4th movement is based on his perspective, supported by a chronology of events in the book *Voices From Tiananmen Square*. In 1989, Jiefang was a student at a Beijing university where he became involved in the pro-democracy movement. According to him, Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms provoked people to question why there was to be no corresponding *political* reform, i.e. democratisation of state power. Some students with increasing knowledge of the outside world looked to eastern European countries for inspiration as to how socialist democracies might work and develop. It was during this period of reform that the pro-democracy movement led by university students sprang into being.

The movement began in spring after Hu Yaobang died of a heart attack on April 15th 1989. He was the general secretary for the CCP who had been forced to resign from the party for his pro-democracy views two years earlier. Many people respected him because he opposed the authoritarianism of the CCP and argued for democracy in China. After his death, people gathered at Tiananmen Square to pay their respects and lay wreaths. But the next day, the CCP removed the wreaths placed by Beijing University students and a demonstration was organised in response. About 3000 students attended a march to Tiananmen Square with a petition involving seven requests:

- Re-evaluation of Hu Yaobang’s achievements
- Rejection of the 1987 ‘anti-bourgeois liberalization campaign’⁴

3. It was named after the Tiananmen Square massacre that happened on that date.

4. That was the state’s reaction to the student movement that existed in 1986–7, who were labeled as bourgeois

- Freedom of press
- Increase of the education budget
- Freedom to protest and demonstrate
- Publication of the financial holdings of senior government officials
- Abolition of municipal regulations controlling demonstrations

A Chronology and Description of Events

On April 18th, 5000 students marched to Tiananmen Square to demand the resignation of Li Peng. Li Peng was the Premier at the time and he held very conservative views. He was seen as one of the main people responsible for corruption. Corruption was viewed by students as a symptom of a centralised bureaucratic political structure, where the state officials had monopoly over power and resources.

Protestors increased to 30,000 later on in the day. At 11pm, 1000 students tried to take a wreath to the gate of Zhongnanhai (CCP headquarters). At approximately midnight on April 19th, the police arrived and demanded students leave Zhongnanhai. They refused and stayed, so between 3am and 4am, the police started using force and violence to remove the students. Students tried to stay as long as possible, but police assaulted and forcibly dragged out those students who refused to leave. This was the first clash between police and students. Later that day, anger erupted and students started to mobilise.

At the time, there were somewhere between 300,000 and 400,000 students at Beijing University. They were angry at the state's violent response to the anti-corruption protest so they decided to do something on April 22nd, a date that coincided with the state funeral for Hu Yaobang. Many students from different universities were also organising protests against corruption while mourning the death of Hu Yaobang. The CCP feared anti-government sentiments and there had been active surveillance of political movements including this one.

The CCP, fearing disorder at the state funeral, set a curfew for the evening of April 21st, after which people were banned from entering Tiananmen Square. Students entered before the curfew and planned to stay there until the next morning. Normally, a CCP state funeral procession would involve the coffin of the dead politician

liberals for wanting democracy.

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and
students.*



being walked around the square several times with *aiyue* (funeral music), before being taken to the crematorium. The CCP, however, were afraid that students would disrupt the state funeral, so Hu Yaobang's coffin was sent straight to the crematorium, bypassing the customary procession. Jiefang went to this funeral and it was his first contact with the pro-democracy movement. At the time, he went not so much for the politics but to experience the movement. Chang An Street, Beijing's longest street, was filled with people paying their final respects.

At this time, students were still demanding Li Peng's resignation over corruption. They wanted to hand him a petition and were physi-

cally kneeling at the doorsteps of Zhongnanhai. Li Peng never came out.

These student protests against corruption were organised partly to honour Hu Yaobang and restore his reputation and dignity that were smeared by his dismissal from the CCP. He represented a political stance against corruption, against the one party policy and for democratic reform. Students were demanding punishment for politicians involved in corruption who had been using their power to benefit themselves. They were not specifically targeting Deng Xiaoping or Li Peng, but were using them as symbols of corruption.

Meanwhile in other cities such as Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan, Tianjin and Xi'an, protests were happening in support of the Beijing students'

demands. Hundreds of students from Tianjin planned to catch a train to Beijing, but university authorities stopped most of them by cancelling their tickets.

On April 26th, the CCP issued a press statement labelling the student protests an ‘anti-government and anti-society movement’ causing 动乱 (turmoil) — a negative term used to discredit the students’ demands. On April 27th, 200,000 students from all over Beijing marched to Tiananmen Square to protest this press statement and misrepresentation of the movement. Over a million citizens supported them along the route. The march lasted from 7am to 9pm and it covered around 20km. It was one of the biggest demonstrations since the Cultural Revolution.

The state refused to change its press statement and the movement grew even bigger. On April 28th, the Autonomous Student Union of Beijing Universities (ASUBU) was established for students to organise together around pro-democracy demands. Students outside of Beijing were also organising and demonstrating: on the same day ASUBU was set up, 6,000 students demonstrated in Tianjin.

By May 4th there was still a deadlock and students continued to demonstrate. May 4th is an important historical date in Chinese political history. In 1919, the May 4th Movement was an anti-imperialist movement in Beijing that led to the end of feudalism and marked the birth of Chinese communism. It was also characterised by significant student involvement and working class dissent and revolutionary activity. To mark the 70th anniversary of the May 4th Movement, Beijing students held a demonstration at Tiananmen Square. Not long afterwards, other groups in society became involved, and journalists started demonstrating for free press with slogans like ‘I want to tell the truth.’ On hearing news that Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, was planning to

visit Beijing, ASUBU decided to organise a protest coinciding with his visit.

Hunger strike begins

On May 13th, about 3,000 students from Beijing University began a hunger strike in Tiananmen Square to protest the government’s reluctance to engage in dialogue. By this time, many students were living and sleeping in the square. Makeshift shelters were made and living conditions were rough. The next day, a few politicians visited the students in the square and promised dialogue, but no agreement was reached. On May 15th, Gorbachev arrived in Beijing. Welcoming of foreign leaders is usually conducted at Tiananmen Square, but this was stopped by the student occupation whose aim was to embarrass the CCP in front of foreign visitors. By May 17th, all of Beijing had been mobilised and there was a huge demonstration in which millions of people from all walks of life participated: workers, students and pretty much the whole of society. They were pro-democracy and against the CCP’s authoritarian reign. Meanwhile, hundreds and thousands of students were being hospitalised every day due to the hunger strike. Their depleting health gained a lot of sympathy from other areas of society. On May 19th, the Beijing Workers’ Autonomous Federation (BWAFF) was set up in support of the students. It was the first independent trade union since the establishment of the CCP government.

On May 20th, the government declared martial law. No protests, petitions or strikes were allowed. Curfews were put in place and there was to be military control of Beijing. However, although martial law was declared, it could not be implemented.

The whole city of Beijing was now involved in this movement and the army was prevented from entering the city by a people’s blockade. Beijing became an autonomous zone. Workers didn’t have to go to work and everyday routines

were disrupted. It was a moment in time where political dissent and activism involved the whole of society and everyone was a 同志 (comrade) and stood in solidarity with each other. There were no police in Beijing, so traffic was being directed by students. Food and drinks were free to all the students because they had workers' support. During this time of crisis and social upheaval, people showed more politeness to each other and solidarity. Even thieves stopped stealing.

After 10 days of deadlock, the government still refused to accept the demands of the movement. By this time, students from all over China were coming to Beijing. Trains were free because workers supported this movement. On May 31st and June 1st, the government started to crack down harder on protestors. At the time, the army could not enter Tiananmen Square because of blockades. Undercover soldiers attempted to sneak into the square with weapons. On June 3rd, around midday, a car with guns in Zhongnanhai was discovered and exposed by students. The students confiscated the weapons and ammunition. The army was still determined to enter but had to get through blockades defended by 20,000 people.

Then the shooting started...

In the middle of the night on June 3rd until the early hours of June 4th, the army started firing. At first, students thought they were using rubber-coated bullets but soon realised they were regular steel bullets. The army and the people of Beijing started fighting. As the army entered the square, people were fighting back with Molotov cocktails, stones and bricks. Around 11pm–12am, the killing started. Jiefang was at university when this was happening and it was being reported on the radio. When they heard the news, he and his friends jumped on their bikes and rode to Tiananmen Square. As they were riding, they passed burning cars, buses and army vehicles, which people had ignited to act as a barricade preventing the army

from coming in further. They also saw injured people being carried away and transported by bike trailers. The army was firing both warning shots and shots aimed directly at people. People were angry and afraid, calling the army '法西斯' (Fascists). People beside Jiefang were hurt and had been shot. All around him people were carrying injured students. Nobody could sleep while bullets were being fired. Blood was everywhere. There were countless deaths and injuries. The exact statistics are still unknown.

Meanwhile at Tiananmen Square, thousands of students stayed staunch and continued their occupation of the square. The government tried to negotiate with movement leaders but they refused to move. When the army arrived at Tiananmen Square at about 2.30am, the atmosphere was full of fear and chaos. Over the megaphones in the square, the government was sending warning messages about this '暴乱' (riot, chaos) and the crackdown. Messages to the square occupants included 'This is your life, your responsibility; take it at your own risk.' By 4am, the army surrounded Tiananmen Square. Lights were turned off and tanks drove in and fired into the crowds to drive the students out of the square. Many walked away 'shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand' crying as they left the square. People were emotionally distressed, traumatised and afraid and many could not believe what was happening. Some soldiers were also injured and killed.

After the massacre, the government regained control of the square. Many of the students left the country and went into exile, while the leaders were arrested and imprisoned. Millions of students had been involved and most just returned to their own lives. There were also some non-cooperative soldiers and generals within the army who refused to obey government orders, and they were sacked in the aftermath of the massacre.

This account of one student's experience of the June 4th movement is one amongst many oth-

ers. There are still Chinese people of my generation who deny the massacre ever happened and consider it 'Western propaganda.' The way it has been portrayed in the West is no doubt with Western bias and the event was utilised to demonstrate Western democracy as 'the way of the future' and proclaim a kind of civilisational superiority, but it is not an event that can be denied. Contrary to many western portrayals of the movement, its goal was not to set up a capitalist democracy, rather to democratize and decentralise power within a socialist economy.

Solidarity and mutual aid

One of the inspiring features that characterised the pro-democracy movement of 1989 is the mutual aid and solidarity between students and workers. This was a conscious recognition of the importance of the working class in winning the struggle for democratic socialism. Ren Wanding, one of the students involved in the June 4th Movement made a speech about the lessons learnt from previous student movements for democracy: the Democracy Wall Movement and the Student Movement of 1986. Ren's critique of previous student movements was that they had no concrete programme for long-term goals and were not connected to working class struggles. But workers involved were arrested and jailed in both movements.

'Students should join the workers, who in their turn should fight for independent trade unions. Only when several million production workers understand that their democratic rights are not handed down to them, but are something that must be fought for, and take command of the situation, will democracy be realised.' — Ren Wanding, April 21, 1989, Tiananmen square⁵

Students reflected on their role in society and took their privileges into consideration. They saw that they as students had more freedom to act and protest than most sections of society which were also excluded from participation in government. Hue Yu, a student writing in 1989 before the massacre argues,

'We can see that in China the people who are under the iron fist of arbitrary rule and slavery are not the students, but the workers, peasants and other strata of society. In the Democracy Movement the students, who have the greater freedom than others, are making the loudest demands for democracy and



Mutual aid

5. cited in Yu and Harrison, eds 1989:46

freedom. This should change, and the people who should speak are not students, but the people.”⁶

Why democracy?

Coming from an anarchist position, I think it’s important to understand why democracy was fought for in China, but also to *critically* support demands for democracy. Under authoritarian communist reign and within the global context of Western cultural dominance, this idea of Western representative democracy was perhaps the most available and accessible political ideal to use as a strategy for liberation. They saw rights such as free speech, freedom to demonstrate and protest and participation in decision-making as part of ‘democracy.’

However, as most of us are aware of, Western capitalist democracies are far from free. In comparison to totalitarian regimes, it seems like an ideal option, but ultimately state power is always oppressive. Western democracies are just better at hiding and governing populations by creating an illusion of freedom and using ideological and political technologies to keep people in line. When there is a small elite governing the majority, even when there is token participation like voting, social hierarchy and inequality are still maintained. Crackdown on dissent also happens but in less visibly violent forms. It is done through surveillance, the police, the court system, the prison system and the education system. Western democracies give an illusion of freedom by allowing voting every few years, but these political systems are still very much in thrall to economic forces and conservative social attitudes of the dominant (usually white) culture.

In Chinese pop culture’s representations of the communist revolution, there is still a deep romanticism of a classless society through struggle,

sacrifice and hardship. There are countless television dramas representing the stories of peasants or workers with the background context being the communist revolution. With this relatively new economic condition of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics,’ which is essentially state capitalism using nationalist rhetoric, the ideals of communism, working class and peasant struggle are part of a romanticised past; a memory. Ideals that started off as a liberating force have reverted back to oppression. The ideal of democracy — Western liberal representative democracy — was a liberating idea from the authoritarian conditions of state communism. Similarly, people in capitalist democracies looked to communist systems for inspiration and liberation.

Ideological strategies employed to discredit dissent

Authoritarian communism and capitalist democracy are really two sides of same coin. It is convenient for the ruling class of both systems to construct themselves in opposition to each other. Often in capitalist democracies, people are taught to think that the opposite of democracy is communism. They are afraid of the *economic* idea of communism because they think it necessarily involves the *political* system of dictatorship. Similarly, CCP propaganda equates the *political* system of democracy with the economic system of *capitalism*.

This deliberate confusion of political and economic systems operates in both oppressive state systems to justify the existence of the state and centralised power. Although their justifications rest on different political ideologies, they both operate to restrict dissent and construct an illusion of freedom. The CCP labelled pro-democracy activists as ‘bourgeois’ — a way of associating democratic ideals to the evils of capitalism. Meanwhile in Western capitalist democracies, the label of ‘communist’ has been used in a derogatory way to

associate anti-capitalists to totalitarian dictatorships, although China and other totalitarian 'communist' states are not truly communist economies. In both contexts, ideologies of liberation are used to justify oppression.

Western capitalist democracies such as the USA or New Zealand always emphasise that they are 'democratic' states, but never call themselves 'capitalist.' Likewise, Chinese political discourse emphasises and refers to China as a 'communist' or 'socialist' country but never a 'totalitarian dictatorship.' This is a way both states try to appeal to people on the grassroots and dupe them into thinking they are free and equal, and at the same time masking the systems that cause more inequality and oppression.

What these idealised visions of freedom and equality also did was sow the seed for criticism when the reality of the situation is the opposite. The student movement in 1989 argued that the CCP was 'practicing capitalism under the name of socialism.'⁷ Similarly, Western democracies are sometimes criticised by their own citizens for not being real democracies — although (most) citizens are allowed limited civil liberties and political participation, enough to provide the illusion of freedom and democracy. Both systems use each other to prop up themselves, creating a false dichotomy, the idea that there are just two options in the way politics can be organised.

Anarchism as an alternative to both totalitarian communism and capitalism has been suppressed, misrepresented and dismissed in both contexts so that hierarchical power structures can continue to exist. But the real danger to the state and capitalism is when communism is combined with anarchism, which is when there is potential for meaningful revolutionary change.

Politicians tell us that grassroots demands that threaten their power are 'unrealistic,' 'im-

possible' and 'not practical' because they 'contradict human nature.' By using media and political rituals, symbols and imagery, they create and construct a sense of reality. Because the state has the power to define what constitutes reality, it becomes hard to think outside of their framework of possibilities. When people internalise these dominant ideas of realism and pragmatism, it limits our imagination of alternative forms of socio-political and economic organisation. Despite these strategies to suppress dissent in state societies, many people can still see right through these ideas that either ignore or justify their oppression and organise collectively to challenge injustice.

The CCP tried to discredit the June 4th Movement by branding democracy activists as causing turmoil and the previous student movement as a 'bourgeois liberalization campaign.' In Aotearoa, Helen Clark branded the Tino Rangatira movement 'haters and wreckers' for organising against the Seabed and Foreshore bill which confiscated more Māori land, and the Crown used Operation Eight to brand Māori and Pākehā anarchists and political activists 'terrorists'⁸ — it's the same bullshit in a different context. In capitalist democracies the repression and violence is less visible and more sophisticated. The state (usually) doesn't need to massacre its own citizens to stay in power. The violence at Tiananmen Square in 1989 showed the depleting power and legitimacy of the CCP and violence was subsequently used to re-establish authority and control.

The Tiananmen Square massacre showed the state's capability for violence and dissolution of dissent. Blood, sweat and tears were shed for justice and liberation, as they always have. But twenty years later, the struggle is not over. While no event

7. Yu and Harrison, eds 1989:56

8. I think because communism worldwide is no longer really a threat to capitalist societies, since countries like China have already assimilated capitalist policies, the new derogatory term since 9/11 has shifted to 'terrorist' rather than 'communist.'

since the Tiananmen Square massacre has garnered the same amount of global and national attention or media coverage, or had the same impact on Chinese politics, resistance against state power and capitalism continues. The political and economic situation in China has only worsened since 1989: unemployment rates are extremely high; the gap between rich and poor is widening more and more; inflation is rampant; and there have been attempts to privatise industries. The power of the state is still strong and people have little say in most aspects of their lives. Within the first three months of 2009, there was news of 58,000 ‘mass incidents,’ which is the state’s term for protest actions, uprisings, strikes, road blocks and rioting.⁹ More recently in China, steelworkers clashed with riot police to stop plans to privatise state-owned Tonghua Steel in Jilin province. The state was forced to listen to the workers’ demands.¹⁰ These recent examples of political activity and the June 4th Movement are all part of the same struggle to take back power nationally and globally, slowly chipping away the power of corporations and the state. Listening to a participant of the movement talk about the bloodshed, the death of freedom fighters and the injustice of the situation makes me angry and upset. The trauma it has caused Jiefang and other students like him, the workers involved, the soldiers who disobeyed orders and all the people who have lived through it, is immense. It explains why my family both here and in China are always concerned for my safety as an activist and political dissident. But I think it would be more tragic and insulting to those who fought and suffered for wanting freedom if the rest of us are too paralysed by fear to fight back. The least we can do to honour the people involved in this movement and others like it, is to keep creating ‘turmoil’ wherever oppression exists. ■

9. <http://chinaworker.info/en/content/news/722/?tpid=2>

10. <http://news.infoshop.org/article.php?story=20090819221156320>

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